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## A PANORAMA OF RURAL ENGLAND

The enduring charm of rural England embodies more than any other feature the personality of its people. The quiet orderliness of England's picturesque towns and villages with their unhurried and unchanging contentment is reflected in the character of its citizens. There can be few travelers to England who have not been captivated by the panorama of rural English life. For it is here, rather than in the cities, that the unending continuity so characteristically British is to be found. Those quaint little towns from which the adventurous sailor has embarked for distant ports, the famous formal gardens of Oxford or Hampton, or the equally famous casual garden before some obscure cottage in the Cotswolds, and the quaint atmosphere of country inns redolent with ale and memories—they are all here in this most nostalgic of books.





# A PANORAMA OF RURAL ENGLAND

INTRODUCTION BY EDMUND BLUNDEN

Edited by W. J. TURNER

*With*  
*48 plates in colour*  
*and*  
*132 illustrations in black and white*

CHANTICLEER PRESS, NEW YORK

*Distributed by*  
HASTINGS HOUSE  
*Publishers          New York*

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## INTRODUCTION

SIDE by side in my bookcase stand two books which have been valued by many of those whom they most concern. Neither Emerson in *English Traits*, written in Victorian times, nor C. F. G. Masterman, whose *Condition of England* appeared a few years before the first world war, was inclined to write of this land in a mood of pure idyll. Both observers expressed grave questionings on things which were happening in the life of our country, and which, if the criticism was well founded, must in the long run diminish its general radiance and fascination. I take an important instance from Emerson : "The eye of the naturalist must have a scope like nature itself, a susceptibility to all impressions, alive to the heart as well as to the logic of creation. But English science puts humanity to the door. It wants the connection which is the test of genius. The science is false by not being poetic." And again he says of us, extending his complaint, "The practical and comfortable oppress them with inexorable claims, and the smallest fraction of power remains for heroism and poetry. No poet dares murmur of beauty out of the precinct of his rhymes. No priest dares hint at a Providence which does not respect English utility."

But I am not summoning up such observers as Emerson in order to call for a public meeting on the defects and dangers of England, especially as we are aware of them, but rather to illustrate through them the intense interest which aspects of England had formerly and have still. Emerson is held as one astonished by these. "Yes, to see England well needs a hundred years ; for, what they told me was the merit of Sir John Soane's Museum, in London—that it was well packed and well saved—is the merit of England ; it is stuffed full, in all corners and crevices, with towns, towers, churches, villas, palaces, hospitals, and charity-houses. In the history of art, it is a long way from a cromlech to York minster ; yet all the intermediate steps may still be traced in this all-preserving island." And our countryman Masterman, at the close of a chapter of forebodings about the agricultural tradition and spirit, offers a picture of what he is philosophically fighting for : "Nature still flings the splendour of her dawns and sunsets upon a land of radiant beauty. Here are deep rivers flowing beneath old mills and churches ; high-roofed red barns and large thatched houses ; with still unsullied expanses of cornland and wind-swept moor and heather, and pine woods looking down valleys upon green gardens ; and long stretches of quiet down standing white and clean from the blue surface of the sea."

If the conflicting claims of industry and "amenities" were visible in the England which Emerson visited, they have become more so since, and

even since Masterman's time ; and in my belief both men would have been heartened by our own eagerness to solve the problem, "give beauty all her right." We live and learn, even at this date. It is a question largely of opportunity to see, of discovering in one way or another what has been unnoticed or remote. Towards this the events of the past few years have certainly contributed. In a railway journey a few days ago I fell into conversation with a private soldier who was unmistakably a Londoner of the completest kind ; and he suddenly told me that a posting had given him some time on the banks of the river Wye. He became quite eloquent on it. He had taken his wife there for a blessed fortnight. There could be no other river like it. On my asking, to keep him going, whether the Wye had suffered such pollution as has alarmed us in other districts, he exclaimed that the Wye was not that sort of a river. No, all rocks, rapids, whirlpools . . . picturesque. Perhaps I should add here in the cause of truth that when I heard some other soldiers discussing the charms of the valley land, with its cornfields and oaks and lines of elms and twinkling meadows which we were passing, one of them said "You can keep it all. I've seen Italy." However, the rest continued to stare out with satisfaction at the home landscape.

This, perhaps, is the easiest and first of the aspects of England which people become aware of as an inimitable and infallible enchantment, and it is no new revelation that it surprises the oldest inhabitants by its variety. You may prove Emerson correct even without touring so many miles : "In the variety of surface, Britain is a miniature of Europe, having plain, forest, marsh, river, sea-shore" ; you may gain a fresh world almost from one village to the next. These divisions are as mysterious as they are delightful. But it is rather with aspects less of nature "broad displayed and the diverse genius of the open country that the contributors to our volume are concerned, than with the works of our nation making itself at home through many centuries. In these matters, I surmise, the gift of seeing is not quite so likely to occur to everyone, and the hints and the treasures of memory offered by the lucky ones have an especial value. The need of them is the greater since the guide book, whether because it has an impossible task to fulfil or because its maker is pardonably limited in his attention to the contents of his region, is so often silent on things and qualities capable of being deeply enjoyed. In my early days I was an inhabitant of a village which we looked for sometimes in books about our part of the world and found, if at all, confined to a statement of the value of the living and the period of the church's construction. Since then, how many have told me what a masterpiece it is—and indeed it contains most of the "aspects" appreciated in the present volume—we could even find a little nautical life for Mr. Walmsley now and then by the barge river. But throughout England the omissions from the guide book are often the prizes of the watchful wanderer.

Poet though he was, and possessing imagination, the great Emerson missed what comes out so well in the text and the pictures of this volume—the poetry of real life in England. His main doctrine probably prevented him from having eyes for that. “The bias of Englishmen to practical skill has reacted on the national mind. They are incapable of an inutility . . .” It is strange that he should have reached that extreme at a time when the country was of late most infatuated with inutilites, with “temples Gothic or Chinese,” with “ruinated” towers and with hermitages—with all that Miss Sackville-West points out of a fantasy in building styles shared by all sorts of English landowners once. It was, if not pure poetry in action, an intention of a poetical order. But we have done better than that, and wealth and poverty alike have achieved aspects of great grace and imaginative sympathy. I wish that Emerson could have read Miss Sackville-West on the country houses and their best secret of “fitting in,” or Dr. Roberts on the cottage garden and the almost mystical sense of the individual plant that makes it. I would have him look with Mr. Thomas Burke into the characteristics of the English inn, town or country, when times allow them to have their bloom again ; and Mr. Betjeman should convert him to the overlooked pleasures and signs of something more than bare essentials in many an industrial town.

Were the taste, the feeling and the eloquence of all our vivid contributors to leave the philosopher from Massachusetts unpersuaded, he might yet be moved a little by the remarkable array of British artists who also, dead or living, contribute so well to the volume. They have had less praise than they deserved, and probably some of them have had less to eat than they needed, yet upon the whole their work has depended on the same English traits which have made such a happy community in most places between man’s life and nature’s. We must all wish that a painter with such vision and devotion as Cotman had had a much more comfortable life, but the hundreds of artists among whom he is eminent demonstrate that the *kind* was far from being neglected. Discerning and perpetuating the aspects of England from the wayside inn to the prospect of the towered city, from the boat of the rush-cutter to the villa of the poet of society, they have been part of a fertile life of many impulses, many abilities and felicities. We catch from them, as from the authors whose words they counterchange with their selections from the living scene, a new resolution not to lose our inheritance, so brought before us ; and if sometimes the voice of the past cries, “Never again shall this be yours,” the present replies “Yet this has come to birth.” Our fortune exists not merely in what we command but in the degree of our recognitions, and to the benefit of that true possession I take it our authors and artists have given their studies from the life.

EDMUND BLUNDEN

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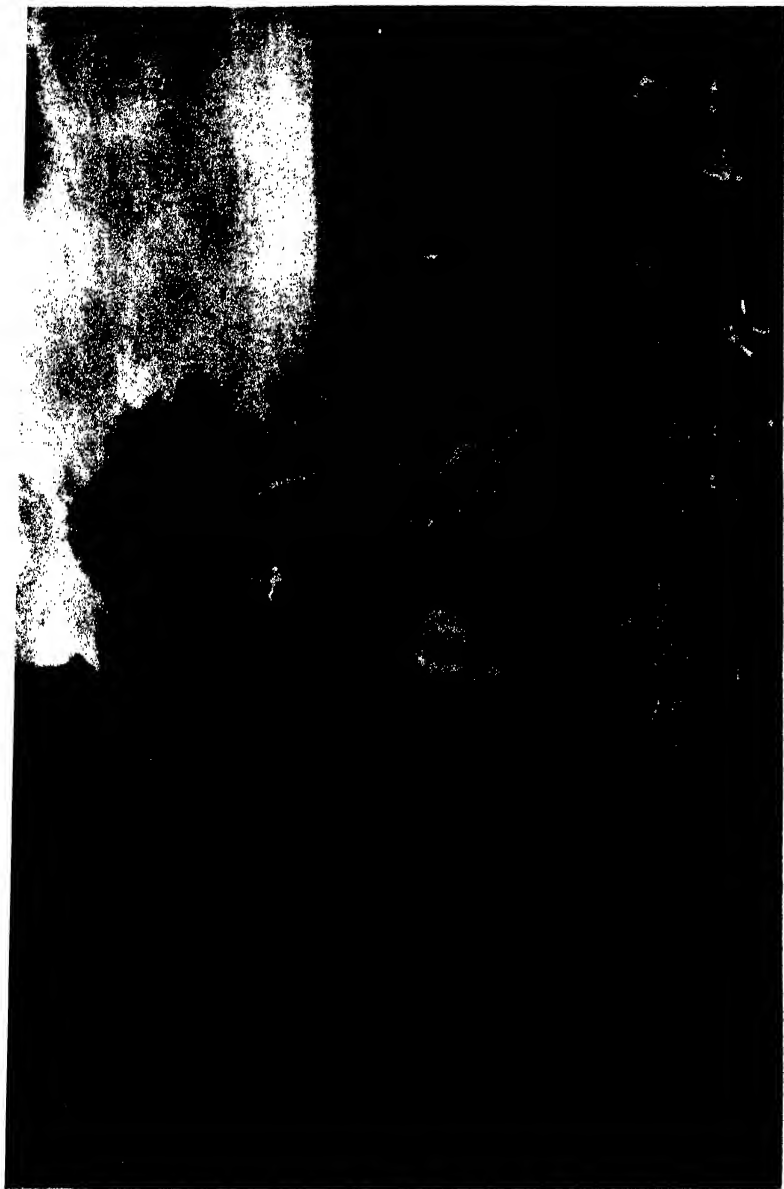
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*By courtesy of Frank T. Sabin*

VIEW OF ARUNDEL CASTLE, SUSSEX  
Coloured engraving by Bailey after William Scott





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QUEEN VICTORIA RIDING IN WINDSOR GREAT PARK WITH LORD MELBOURNE

Oil painting by Sir F. Grant

# ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSES

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## V. SACKVILLE-WEST

**T**HERE is nothing quite like the English country house anywhere else in the world. France has her châteaux, Italy her historic villas, Spain her gardens like the Generalife hooked on to the hillside, Germany her robber castles, but the exact equivalent of what we mean by the English country house is not to be found elsewhere.

It may be large, it may be small ; it may be palatial, it may be manorial ; it may be of stone, brick, stucco, or even of beams and plaster ; it may be the seat of the aristocracy or the home of the gentry—whatever it is, it possesses one outstanding characteristic : it is the English country house.

You may observe that I do not put a hyphen between the two words. I write "country house," not "country-house." This is deliberate. It is because I want to emphasise that the house is essentially part of the country, not only *in* the country, but part of it, a natural growth. Irrespective of grandeur or modesty, it should agree with its landscape and suggest the life

of its inhabitants past or present ; should never overwhelm its surroundings. The peculiar genius of the English country house lies in its knack of fitting in.

## II

THE English are a rural-minded people on the whole, which perhaps explains why our rural domestic architecture is so much better than our urban. Our cities, generally speaking, are deplorable. There is a lack of design which must make the French smile. When the French hint delicately at this we are apt to murmur "Bath," and then come to a full stop. Challenged further, we produce Oxford and Cambridge ; and then fall back on certain cathedral towns : York, Durham, Salisbury, Canterbury. Challenged again, we fall back on our third line of defence : our small country towns, say Chippenham, or Abingdon, Burford, Painswick, Devizes, Lewes. Challenged once more, we fall back on the fourth line where we find ourselves in an even stronger position. We have not been able to put up much defence for our cities, but once we are reduced to fighting on our villages we have a number of outposts. Their names are too many to record. We all have our favourites which come to the mind with a vision of moors or a memory of running water ; hidden amongst trees or gazing across the sea ; grey stone villages, pink brick villages ; villages of the soft south country or the north, they belong to the soil in the same sense as the country house belongs to the soil and indeed are frequently and happily associated with it. The cottage, the farm, and the manor are the same in spirit.

## III

IF this premise be accepted, it must follow that some types of our country houses satisfy our demands better than others. And, since it would be idle to write so brief and unprofessional a monograph as this from any but the most personal point of view, prejudiced possibly but certainly offered with conviction, I must insist from the start that some of our major country houses (more properly to be called "seats") seem to me to be excrescences which should never have defaced the countryside. These are the exceptions. It is not a question of size. Some of our major and most famous houses accord with their surroundings as quietly as their little cousins. Others most emphatically do not. The reason for this is that they were too often built all of a piece, to gratify the ostentation of some rich man in an age when

display meant more than beauty ; they were not allowed to grow with the oaks and elms and beeches ; they were not true country houses at all, but a deliberate attempt to reproduce in the country the wealth and fame which their owner enjoyed in town. They were his country residence rather than his home. They were false to the real tradition. They do not represent England at all, and, although they must be mentioned and even illustrated in the following pages, it must be understood that the sympathies of the author of this monograph are not with them, but follow a more modest range. Thus, although Chatsworth, Stowe, Blenheim, Welbeck, Bowood, Castle Howard, Wentworth Woodhouse, to instance only a few, have their splendours, they cannot be said to melt into England or to share the simple graciousness of her woods and fields. They are as much out of place here in England as Versailles or Vaux-le-Vicomte are in place in France. They do not represent the peculiar English genius for domestic architecture. They are usually the work of a single eminent architect, not of the anonymous builders who in successive centuries added a piece here, an ornamentation there, as the needs and taste and resources of the owners changed. They may have the advantage of architectural unity ; from the other point of view, more sentimental perhaps, less romantic, they lack the advantage of a natural development. And it must be added that the unity is frequently of a style not to be admired.

#### IV

**I**T was difficult to decide how to arrange a short monograph like this. Obviously it was impossible to mention or to illustrate more than a very small number of the houses that ought to be mentioned and illustrated. The question was a double one : first, which to select ; and second, the most convenient order in which to discuss them. One might do it in several ways : by date, by county, by size and fame, by material (brick, stone, black and white). All things considered, it seemed best to do it by date. That meant beginning with the castles. But then, immediately, everything began to overlap. Castles cropped up in centuries where they had no business at all, and, although the need for fortification had ceased to exist, the liking for it romantically persisted. What, for instance, were Maxstoke and Broughton doing in the Fourteenth century ? or little Nunney, later still ? or Hurstmonceux raising its lovely machicolated towers in the reign of Henry VI ? Clearly, the English dwelling refused to be pigeon-holed. Then there were the additions, separated sometimes by several hundred years. Broughton jumped from

1300 to 1590 ; Knole from King John to King James ; Compton Wynyates grew in a leisurely way between 1450 and 1520, then wandered, still growing, through the Eighteenth century, and came finally to rest somewhere in the middle of the Nineteenth. If my English houses were to be treated chronologically it became manifest that the classification must in many cases be very elastic indeed.

This realisation, inconvenient though it might be, did however confirm the theory that the charm and genius of our domestic architecture lay in its gradual and continuous development. It was possible also to work out that development on the guiding lines of our internal history, through periods of tumult into periods of prosperity and peace at home ; the control of the Crown, the power of the barons, the quiet security of the squire, the rise of the middle class, the flowering of the great servants of the State, the insolence of the later aristocracy—all were represented in the homes they created for themselves in their increasingly peaceful land. For it must be remembered that the English house owes much to the relative peace which this island has enjoyed internally since the Norman Conquest. The Conquest itself was less of a convulsion than (eventually) a force of unification. The wars of England—the Crusades, the Hundred Years' War—took her kings abroad ; the wars of Edward I, Edward II and Edward III took them to Wales and Scotland ; the wars with Spain and France were not fought on English soil. The Wars of the Roses were not of the kind that devastate a country, and indeed it remains for Cromwell to claim the dishonour of doing greater damage in England by an Englishman than any which had gone before or has followed since. Fortunate in her domestic history, it seems likely that England (if in accordance with her tradition she escapes invasion in the present war) will witness the gradual destruction of her lovely inheritance by economic rather than violent means.

HAVING decided, then, to treat my subject chronologically so far as was possible, without tying myself down to any unbreakable rule, I turned to the castles, and here found that my task was simplified by the fact that no uninhabited castle could possibly be considered as a country house. Ruins were not for me. Without regret I discarded those imposing but purely defensive wrecks which once guarded our coasts, our cities, the Welsh marches and Scottish border, but I still thought ruefully of those which might be called the more intimate castles, not really castles in the true sense of the term, since they were never intended to withstand an attacking force, but



COMPTON WYNYATES, WARWICKSHIRE  
Water colour by T. M. Rooke, 1916

which carried on the tradition of feudalism long after the necessity for defence had disappeared. Some of them, indeed, were no more than manor-houses pretending to be fortified ; others, again, were obviously inspired by the *chateaux-forts* which had taken the fancy of the builder during his service in the French wars. They were visions of chivalry, not strongholds. There was Stokesay in Salop, where Sir Lawrence of Ludlow went to the quite unnecessary trouble of obtaining the royal licence to crenellate ; Scotney in Sussex, which still dreams amongst its flaming azaleas above its dark-green moat ; Nunney in Somerset, a tiny copy of the Paris Bastille ; Bodiam in Sussex (which certainly might have aspired to defend its valley against a French invader), remaining uncompleted, with rounded towers rising out of a floor of water-lilies. All these for one reason or another could find no place in my book : either they were deserted or else they were ruined. But there were plenty of others, and I found no difficulty in believing the statement of one authority that at one time no less than fifteen hundred castles stood on English soil.

I had to make my choice amongst castles that remained and could still be counted as country houses. The huge ducal pair, Arundel and Alnwick,

one in the far south, the other in the far north, immediately came to mind. They were comparable in many respects : both dominated the country from their hillsides ; both sprawled above a little river, the Arun or the Aln ; both took their history back to Norman times ; both echoed with the names that resound through Shakespeare—Howard and Percy, Norfolk and Northumberland. So far so good. But in another respect they were also comparable, and this spoilt them both. Tremendous piles though they are, seen from a distance, a closer view showed that the Norman keep of Arundel, the Norman arches of Alnwick, had been buried inside the rebuilding and restoration of a century which loved Gothic for its own spiky sake, battlements for their associations, and towers for the proclamation of lordship. Arundel and Alnwick, in a word, were large and largely fakes.

There was a castle, however, away in another corner of England completing an irregular triangle with the other two ; a castle as richly looped to English history, a castle which in no sense could be called a fake. Sullen, secretive, it looked and still looks across the bright green water-meadows towards the Severn where sea-gulls circle and the wild geese fly. Nothing but its colour and its beauty could save it from being wholly tragic and sinister. Its history is tragic enough, for it records the murder of an English king. Edward II died there in 1327 after five months of imprisonment, with the knowledge and connivance of his host. Indignities had been heaped upon him throughout the summer months from April to September ; his jailers placed putrid carcases into his prison and shaved him with ditch-water and crowned him with hay to make a mock of him before his dreadful end.

Dark tales ; but Berkeley Castle is not dark. Not even the great yews on the terrace, cut into the shapes of elephants carrying howdahs on their backs, can sadden its beauty. It is rose-red and grey, red sandstone and grey stone, the colour of old brocade ; the colour of pot-pourri ; then there is a sudden buttress of yellow stone, and then a dark purple lump of masonry ; red valerian juts out from the cracks. Berkeley has its own peculiarities of colouring. Its own Hunt-pack assembles under its walls, the coats of the hunt servants not pink as customary in English hunting scenes, but canary-yellow. Berkeley has a swagger of its own.

The same proud family has held it for eight hundred years. It must be the oldest inhabited castle in England, built originally to defend the Severn valley against the Welsh. The water-meadows can still be flooded at will. It is fitting to think that the first English translation of the Bible was made here (if we may accept the authority of Caxton, our first English printer) by John Trevisa, the local vicar and private chaplain to Thomas, Lord Berkeley, when the castle was already two hundred years old. It is said that the first chapter

of Genesis was painted in black letter on the chapel cloister wall. It is very English, all that, and very suitable.

After the massive secrecy of Berkeley one turns to the mirrored magic of Leeds and Broughton, floating swanlike above their moats. Leeds, fortunately for itself, is nowhere near the industrial town of that name, but lies in a hollow of Kent between Maidstone and Canterbury. Its moat is no regular geometrical moat, but a saucer of a lake spreading flat at the bottom of its bowl of green slopes. Black swans pass gravely and gracefully under the arches of the castle, making the pale grey of the walls seem even paler. The very fact that the water passes under arches turns Leeds Castle into a Kentish Venice. By moonlight the solid walls have no substance ; they drift, they seem scarcely moored. Broughton does not now rise quite so abruptly as Leeds out of the water. At Broughton there are lawns which interrupt the reflection, but in an unexpected way these level English lawns almost take the place of water ; it is merely that they are opaque instead of translucent ; they are green as water though less quivering, less sensitive to clouds or sunlight.

England is green throughout ; her seas, her woods, her fields all island-green. Green, quiet England. Old, quiet England, disliking war, never having known war at home in the sense that European countries knew war. No devastation, no wrecking of villages and the homes of man, whether castle or cottage. There might be incidents as at Berkeley, where a breach was deliberately cut in the walls after Cromwell's troops had stormed the castle, a breach which exists to this day, never to be repaired, on the understanding that the castle must be handed back to the Crown if ever the gap should be mended. Such is the continuity of English history. We suffer (or enjoy) to-day the arrangements made for us several hundred years ago, a little filament of tradition running through the centuries. As a result of a siege in 1645 the eighteenth Lord Berkeley was forbidden to mend his house ; to-day, in 1941, the twenty-eighth Lord Berkeley, a lineal descendant, may not build up his house either. A curious obligation to impose on a man in the twentieth century, to render his castle undefendable !

The continuity is indeed impressive. Lumley, its great keep blackened now by the grime of the Durham collieries, is still owned by the family which has lived on the same ground for a thousand years and which built the castle. It is true that Vanbrugh laid his hands upon the windows, but the inner courtyard still displays the quarterings of the Lumleys from William the Conqueror to Queen Elizabeth and the effigies of the Lumley Warriors lie carved in stone along the wall of the chapel.

Berkeley, Leeds, Broughton, Lumley . . . Then one thinks of other castles : Warwick, hanging over the Avon in so dangerous a way that it seems



just about to pitch down into the waters and be swept away by Shakespeare's river for ever ; St. Donat's, in rocky Glamorgan, compact of square towers inside the rounded outer walls ; Sizergh, in Westmorland, held by the Stricklands for over six hundred years ; and that strange island fortress, St. Michael's Mount, off the coast of Cornwall, rising on its rock sheer out of the sea as though it were about to be blown into flame by the torches of its red-hot pokers, staring from the embrasures of its window-seats straight across the Atlantic with nothing but ocean between itself and America from whom our help will come.

All these are true castles, and I have omitted many—Naworth, Raby, Allington, Chilham's round Norman tower, and even royal Windsor—but what is one to say about such places as Maxstoke and Hurstmonceux ? Are they to be regarded as castles or as country homes ? Is Maxstoke to be considered as a castle, which, although it calls itself Maxstoke Castle, is no more a defensive castle than any other manor-house putting itself into a position of historically unnecessary defence ? What is one to say about Hurstmonceux, unreal as theatrical scenery and even more romantic ? These castles, which are not fortress castles built for military purposes, puzzle one until one realises that the castle tradition went on for years after the need for defensive castles had ceased. The habits of life were altering ; the home was becoming more of a home and less of a stronghold ; the relative peace and comfort of Tudor times were replacing the violence of earlier days, and the result was two-fold. The picturesque elements of the castle were retained—the moat, the gatehouse, the battlements, the drawbridge—but either they were incorporated amongst buildings better adapted to the new requirements, or else they were architecturally reproduced as " features."

Ightham Mote, though it cannot claim a long tenure of the same ownership and is scarcely to be termed a castle, may stand as representative of the modifications imposed upon fifteenth-century buildings. It is rightly described as " a most engaging agglomeration of different styles (where) every age has had its say, every owner has set his mark." It is a lost little place, with its grey stone gatehouse, brown tile roofs, patches of beam and plaster, Gothic doorways and mullioned windows.

Very much the same may be said of Maxstoke, in Warwickshire, which, although more of a castle than Ightham and lacking Ightham's varied agglomeration, yet has the seventeenth-century dwelling-house tacked on to the Plantagenet buildings. Then there is Hever in Kent, which has met with so unusual a fate that it deserves to be recorded. This grey little castle, once the home of Anne Boleyn, very square and neat within itself, came into the hands of William Waldorf Astor (later Viscount Astor), who wished to entertain

week-end parties of twenty-five guests. It was clearly impossible to add a wing to a building limited by the confines of its own moat. Backed by the Astor millions, however, the new owner proceeded to build a replica of a complete Tudor village, cottages which although from the outside apparently separate were linked inside by a series of winding passages, so that no guest, once indoors, could imagine himself in anything but one vast sprawling country house.

Last on my list of castles comes Hurstmonceux, which resembles Hever in the one particular that it has found a wealthy owner to-day. But with Hurstmonceux the case was different ; it was not a question of additions, but of rebuilding the ruined walls and halls. Only the front of the red-brick castle remained : the two great towers of the gateway, the flanking wings, rising superbly from the green fosse which had once been the moat. Lost among the oaks and bracken of Sussex, the sea not far away, there was a beauty of desolation, a nobility in ruin which supplied a fantasy that restoration, however skilful, can never recapture.

## VI

MEANWHILE, moving away from the castle, the semi-castle, or even the fortified dwelling, a different type was gradually developing in England which, from its modest beginnings, was later to find its expression in the palatial homes of the Tudor nobility. The system of grander provincial English life inevitably dictated this development. The prosperous yeoman demanded something better than the labourer's cottage ; the squire demanded something better than the yeoman, the lord demanded something better than the squire, and thus by logical progression the three types of Tudor domestic architecture arose. With the yeoman's abode this is perhaps not the place to deal, since it can scarcely be ranked among the country houses, but it is still to be met with in the length and breadth of the island, characteristic of its locality, unpretentious, and so English that England would be less England without it. Our lanes and villages, farmsteads and hamlets will produce them by the score. The beams and plaster of Kent, Sussex and Cheshire, the beams and brick of Hampshire, the stone of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, all take their place worthily beside the more ambitious aspiration of the squire or the lord of the manor.

It is difficult to assign exact dates for the style which we roughly know as Tudor. The English genius slowly evolved its own idiom in this manner, but the very slowness of its growth renders the result confusing, and it would be perfectly possible for an untrained eye to mistake, say, a seventeenth-century Cotswold manor-house for one of the same type built at least a hundred



SOUTH WRAXALL MANOR HOUSE, WILTSHIRE  
Engraving by G. Hollis from the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1838

years earlier. It is possible, again, for the late fifteenth century to stray over into the sixteenth without any loss of this general family likeness ; it is difficult to believe, for instance, that such a house as Ockwells, in Berkshire, was built as early as 1450. The Gothic influence is still visible in the tall, almost ecclesiastical windows, but I doubt whether any visitor, asked for a date, would hesitate to reply " Tudor." Similarly a mixture of dates of construction such as may be seen at the exquisite South Wraxall, in Wiltshire (1470 or even earlier, with additions belonging to both ends of the sixteenth century) compose themselves agreeably into a whole which most people would designate as " a Tudor manor-house." South Wraxall claims to be the first house in England where Sir Walter Raleigh smoked his pipe.

Again, at Lacock Abbey, which stands on the outskirts of one of the most picturesque of Wiltshire villages, the confusion of dates must baffle all but the best-informed. There are the old convent buildings of the thirteenth century, cloisters of the fifteenth, a whole quadrangle and an octagonal tower dating from 1554, and a Gothic archway of 1754. To complicate matters further, the Sir William Sharrington who added the quadrangle and the tower also altered the windows of the thirteenth-century part and built new chimneys. The general effect, however, is held together in surprising unity by the use of the beautiful Bath stone. Without therefore attempting any pedantic exactitude we may conveniently consider the rise of the manor-house from about 1500 to about 1650.



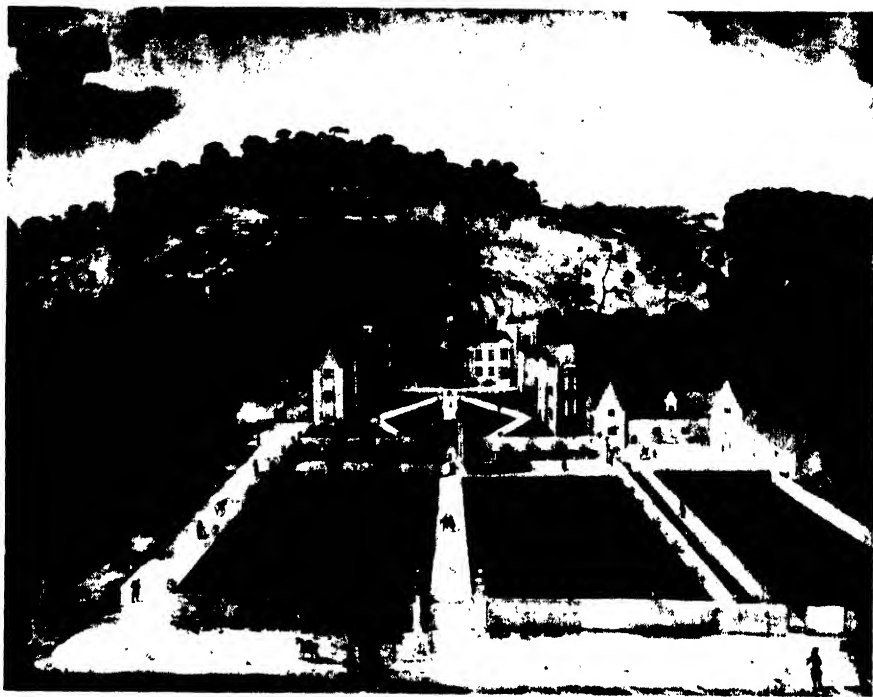
SANDFORD ORCAS MANOR HOUSE, DORSET  
 Sepia drawing by H. J. Medlicott

A very brief glance at English social history will reveal the reason for the prevalence of the manor-house, and also the reason why it may be regarded as the connecting link between the fortified castle and the "stately home" of later times. The unit or parcel of land known as the manor (a division of England dating back to the Norman conquest), when it was not the property of the Crown or the Church, belonged to a private landowner. He might be a landowner on a large scale, in which case a number of manors would be in his possession, but as circumstances changed he would dispose of certain of his acres to smaller men, thus gradually creating the class we know as the landed gentry and producing that very English character the squire. The squire might or might not be Lord of the Manor as well as owning the acres, but he had to live somewhere, and that somewhere was usually known as the manor-house. Possibly it may have stood on the site of a ruder dwelling provided by the original owner for his bailiff or manager ; in any case, for manifest reasons it would be attached to the village ; convenience, safety, and the inadequacy of communications all demanded such a situation. The village, the church and the manor-house ; the people, the priest and the squire. It is no exaggeration to say that examples appear inexhaustible ; England is not a large country, but listen to a group of English people interested in such matters, and you will



CRANBORNE MANOR HOUSE, DORSET  
Drawn and engraved by T. Rackett and F. Basire

soon find that each one has his particular "discovery" of which the others may not even have heard. As one example I might take Mells in Somerset, where the shadow of the high church tower veers slowly like a pointing finger across the lawns of the manor garden. Or Sandford Orcas, in Dorset, where a steep little lane leads up from the village to the church and to the archway of the manor alike. Or Sutton Courtney, in Berkshire, where from the end of the village street you can look up at the house through wrought-iron gates, even if you have not the privilege of walking in the garden where a wilderness of roses overhangs the Thames and mossy walls crumble among the statues behind the borders filled with flowers. Or Avebury in Wiltshire, that Downland village of strange associations, enclosed within an earthwork older than Stonehenge. Here, at Avebury, you might fail to observe the manor-house if you did not know that there was one to seek, unless, indeed, a familiarity with the usual system taught you that the place to look for it was beside the church, and there you would find it, at the end of a long haunted avenue of elms, hidden round a corner, a low grey house standing within a garden enclosed by white walls thatched in the manner characteristic of walls in that part of the country. It is a steep small bit of thatching, like a miniature pent roof, which at Avebury takes a curiously witch-like quality, something like the gingerbread house of Hansel and Gretel. The stream of the Kennet runs along one side of the garden, waving the river-weeds against its ripples. The union between the flowing stream and the whitewashed thatched walls and the grey house, and the Downs beyond, so sober, so English, so typical in spite of the Druidic magic. It is difficult to resist being carried away on small streams like the Kennet



BURTON CONSTABLE, YORKSHIRE  
Oil painting by G. Barret

to places one has seen and loved. It is hard to restrict oneself to a mere list ; hard to give a bare mention to places such as St. Catherine's Court, in Somerset ; Parham Park, in Sussex, with its heronry ; Parnham Manor-house, in Dorset ; Chastleton, in Oxfordshire ; Cranborne and Athelhampton, in Dorset ; Stanton Old Hall, in Derbyshire (where the sword of the great-great-great-grandfather of the present tenant still hangs in the kitchen) ; Stanway and Bibury Court and Owlpen, in Gloucestershire—ah, what a dream is there ! Owlpen, that tiny grey manor-house, cowering amongst its enormous yews, yews that make rooms in the garden with walls taller than any rooms in the house ; dark, secret rooms of yew hiding in the slope of the valley.

They vary in size, these houses, but as a rough generalisation it may be said that they are convenient and manageable. A second category, less properly to be reckoned among the manors, fortunately for their owners in these days, do not quite equal the enormous piles which we shall see arising towards the end of the sixteenth century. The houses in this second category are large, but not overwhelming, and, again restricting myself to the tantalising system

of giving a mere list, I stand bewildered before the wealth I have to choose from : shall I include Barrington Court, in Somerset ; Mapperton, in Dorset ; Levens Hall, in Westmorland, that pale house with its topiary gardens ; the Vyne, in Hampshire, of brick and stone ; Ashby St. Ledgers, in Northampton ; Burton Agnes, in Yorkshire ; Burton Constable, also in Yorkshire ; and that fine Buckinghamshire mansion, Chequers, built somewhere round 1565, and now assigned for ever by the generosity of Lord Lee of Fareham as the country residence of the Prime Ministers of England ?

Chequers is a country house which any squire might love. What then shall we say of Littlecote, in Wiltshire, the home of the wild Darells ? Littlecote is long and low and pink, with mullioned windows and forty gables of simple proportions ; the garden behind the house is all that an English garden should be : lawns as perfect as those of an Oxford college, flower borders designed with a perfect regard for a most unusual combination of colours, a water-garden fed by that same Kennet which flows past Avebury. For the continuity of history, you could scarcely have a better example of it than at Littlecote, where a Roman tessellated pavement was uncovered in the park, revealing that this sixteenth-century house stands on the site of a villa once belonging to some rich provincial Roman more than a thousand years earlier.

If I had to choose only one of the moderate-sized houses (as distinct from the little manor-house and the greater country house) to show a stranger an example of what our domestic architecture could produce during the sixteenth century, Littlecote would certainly have a strong claim. But then I should also have to consider Bramshill, which, although somewhat later in date (it was not completed externally until 1612) and built on a nobler scale than Littlecote, shares much of Littlecote's rosy beauty. It has the characteristic long gallery, the ornamental plaster-work ceilings, the tall mantelpieces of mixed marble. Lovely inside and out, Bramshill, standing among the fine trees and bracken of its park, offers as fair a picture as any house in England.

But what about Haddon in Derbyshire, standing above the Wye, which may share with Penshurst the claim to be one of the most romantic of our houses ? romantic both in their appearance and in the lives of those who lived in them. Love and poetry hang about them, floating like flags from the tower-tops. With Haddon and Penshurst and Hardwick we climb up the rungs of the ladder which will lead us finally to such great Elizabethan piles as Montacute and Longleat, Hatfield and Knole. Haddon took 550 years in the building, a very good example of the gradual growth which culminates in a perfect unity.

Hardwick, in Derbyshire, has a different story, for it was built all of a piece in seven years, 1590 to 1597, by a commanding lady who married four



HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE  
Oil painting by Rex Whistler

husbands ; bullied and survived them all ; lived to the age of ninety (1518 to 1608), spent her life " proud, furious, selfish and unfeeling, a builder, a buyer and seller of estates, a moneylender, a farmer, and a merchant of lead, coals and timber." Not only did she build Hardwick, but also Oldcotes, Worksop, Bolsover and Chatsworth—not the present Chatsworth, but an earlier house which was begun in 1557 and pulled down in 1688. Not content with all this, she also saw to it during her lifetime that a fine monument to her memory should be put up in Derby, the grand disagreeable old lady whose husbands' names are now forgotten, but who comes imperishably down to us as Bess of Hardwick.

" Four times the nuptial bed she warmed,  
And every time so well performed  
That when death spoiled each husband's billing  
He left the widow every shilling."

Hardwick is an unusual house. Its speciality is its enormous windows :

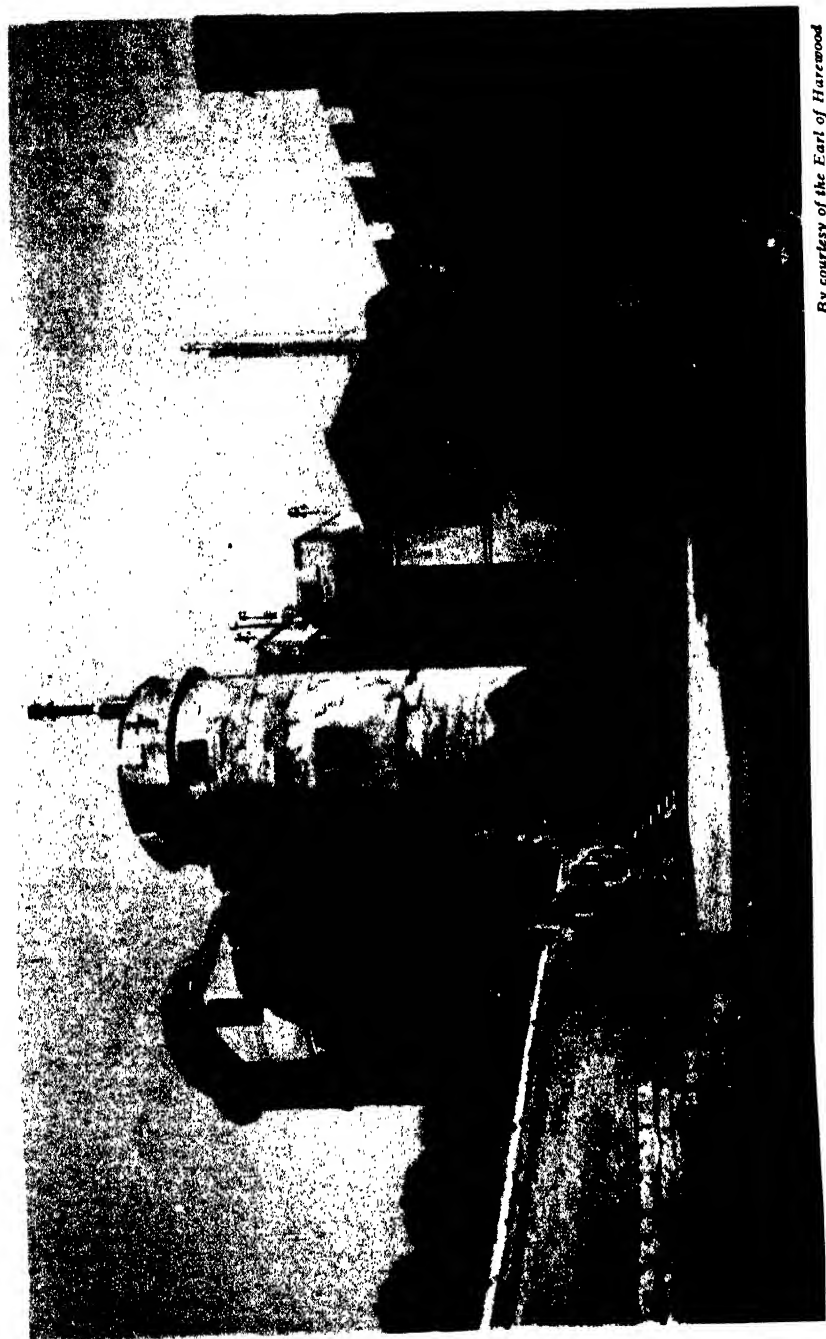
" Hardwick Hall,  
More glass than wall."

But, apart from its exterior, the interior is exuberant with the fantasy of a rich imagination. The raised plaster-work of the so-called Presence Chamber,





THE TOPIARY, LEVENS HALL, WESTMORLAND  
Water colour by Joseph Nash



*By courtesy of the Earl of Harewood*

**WINDSOR CASTLE THE NORMAN TOWER**

Water colour by Paul Sandby 1767



*By courtesy of Walkers Galleries London*

WESTMINSTER HALL AND ABBEY  
Drawn by J. Gendall, engraved by D. Havell



*By courtesy of the Artist and Major the Hon. William Jolliffe*

MELLS MANOR HOUSE AND CHURCH, SOMERSET  
Oil painting by Sir William Nicholson



*By courtesy of the Trustees of the National Gallery*

**A COUNTRY CALL**  
Oil painting by G. Stubbs



THE PRESENCE CHAMBER, HARDWICK HALL, DERBYSHIRE  
Water colour by Lake Price

with its hunting scenes and strange forest landscape, the curiously original staircase, the wealth of tapestry, the swaggering coats-of-arms—all make one feel that there must have been something about the magnificent Bess to justify the witch's prophecy that when she ceased to build she would die. A spell of hard frost stopped her building one winter, and die she duly did.

Coming from Hardwick to Penshurst in Kent is like coming from the abode of a giant to the graceful gracious dwelling of ladies. One feels that all the inhabitants of Penshurst must have been delicate and fair. The rough old banqueting hall is almost out of place ; it should not belong to the dreamy house and green-hedged garden. Yet with its ogived Gothic windows it makes half the beauty of the garden front ; the stone tracery of the windows of that hall, built in 1340, melts perfectly though differently into the Elizabethan house tacked on to the earlier building, another example of how the English house has grown little by little throughout the centuries.

Sir Philip Sidney lived here at Penshurst, and the Earl of Leicester, beloved of Queen Elizabeth, and Saccharissa, beloved of Edmund Waller, the

statesman loved by a queen, the woman loved by a poet—history and poetry all mixed up. An English country centre of courtliness, gaiety and culture which we may favourably compare with the court of Urbino and Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, although the small provincial Kentish court of the Sidneys and their ladies and poets must have been far less boring and self-conscious than the Court of Urbino with its interminable conversations lasting from dusk to dawn. I imagine that the English conversation of the Sidneys and their friends at Penshurst flowed more elastic and less organised than the conversations at Urbino. English people do not like being organised ; they like to live their own lives as best seems to them. The Sidneys, in fact, were living their own lives at Penshurst and talking in their own way, freely and gaily, in the same free and elastic way as Englishmen were building their houses all over the country ; according as their taste and income allowed them. I fancy that any English aristocratic intellectual house-party in 1610 would not have differed very much from the equivalent house-party held at any time between the years 1912–1939. The Cecils must have talked in very much the same way at Hatfield in 1610 as the Cecils at Hatfield might talk in 1939, with the same mixture of political and intellectual interests, switching over from one to the other ; and so, I imagine, a family party of the Sidneys at Penshurst must have run over all the happenings of life, skating gracefully from one subject to the other, never dwelling ponderously on anything, but always touching delicately and briefly, in the true sense of Humanism.

From Penshurst we come to its great neighbour Knole, separated only by a few leafy miles of the Kentish Weald. One of the largest houses in England, Knole may stand as representative of the enormous homes erected for themselves by the Elizabethan and Jacobean nobility. Yet here again we find that Knole grew, and that its gables (which give it so peculiarly Elizabethan a character) were added to an earlier structure. Once the palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury, then a royal palace, Knole came to its fulfilment as the home of an English family in whose hands it has remained ever since 1586. It is an interesting example of a house which, although so vast in extent (being built round a system of seven courtyards and covering over five acres of ground), is yet perfectly subdued in its external parts. You could not isolate any separate section and say, " This was built for display." The grey and green courtyards are quiet as a college ; the garden paths suited to the paces of scholars as well as of courtiers ; its " stately and tempered mediaevalism " lacks all taint of the *nouveau riche*. The interior, contrariwise, is richly decorated. Elizabethan and Jacobean interiors always were. There are the long galleries, the elaborate plaster ceilings, the grand staircase with the heraldic leopards sitting on top of the newels, the sumptuous furniture of velvet and



ONE OF THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE'S HORSES, WITH A VIEW OF WELBECK ABBEY  
Oil painting by Abraham van Diepenbeck

brocade, the curtained beds, the polished floors, the panelled rooms, the stained glass of the heraldic windows. I have often wondered about the everyday life of the inhabitants of houses such as Knole and Penshurst, Haddon and Hardwick, Hatfield and Longleat, Cobham and Chequers, Bramshill and Apethorpe. How did they live? They built their grand houses to suit their desire for a home, but, having built them, they must have been in a quandary how to keep themselves and their guests warm. I imagine that they must all have crowded round the fireplace in a long gallery, the gallery which was the living-room and of which we show a typical example from Hardwick. Those long galleries must have been draughty and cold unless you crouched and crowded round the big fireplace or got into the big bed and drew the curtains round you and shut yourself into the black secrecy of love and sleep with mistress or with wife. The bedroom with the huge curtained bed was usually situated





KNOLE, KENT  
Ink and wash drawing by Hendrik de Cort



MELFORD HALL, SUFFOLK, 1840  
Oil painting by G. Havell, Jr.

at the end of the long gallery. It might, as at Knole, be the bedroom assigned to the Venetian Ambassador or to the King, or to a poet, or to an archbishop of Canterbury, or to Charles the Second spending a night there with Nell Gwyn.

This, as I see it, was the way in which the cultured Englishman of the sixteenth century built his house, conversed, shivered, hunted, entertained his friends, drank, and snored. His prodigious household dined at long tables in the banqueting hall, while he and his family, his guests and his chaplain dined at an upper table in the same room at the same time. His household occupied long galleries also, but they were at the top of the house, attics running the whole length of one wing just under the roof. At Knole, for example, these attics are still known as the Retainers' Galleries, and a list dated 1623 still hangs from a nail giving the names of over a hundred "retainers," with their various employments.

One must not forget sport, that manifestation of masculine activity which always played so large a part in English country life, and which is so intimately associated with the English country house. Outdoor life has always been more important to the English country gentleman than the indoor; the field more alluring than the hearth. In one picture we reproduce the owner of Melford Hall, in Suffolk, Sir Hyde Parker, is shown with his house in the background and his dogs well to the front, also his bag for the day—not a very good bag

considering that he had got a neighbour over to join him in a day's shooting : two partridges and one hare. One of the dogs, in default of game, carries his master's top hat. In another picture we show the old house of Welbeck, seen between the legs of an extremely glossy horse.

The picture of Sir Hyde Parker and his neighbour is interesting because it includes the portrait of his gamekeeper, whose name is also recorded : Thomas Petch. We may be apt to think of the old country squire as a snob, but this is not true. I do not believe that any caste snobbishness ever existed between the English squire and his people. A foundation of reality between them entirely levelled all class feeling. Thomas Petch, the keeper, takes his place as a matter of course beside Sir Hyde Parker, his neighbour, and his house. They are all part of the same system of life.

## VII

**T**HIS may be a convenient place to mention two specialised and localised types of building which cannot be omitted from a general survey. I refer first to the style we call black-and-white, and then to the brickwork of East Anglia. Black-and-white describes itself ; it means those timbered houses constructed of heavy beams set into pale plaster. Startling and stripy in their effect, a few famous houses of this type are concentrated in Cheshire. Chester itself is renowned for its streets of black-and-white houses, and very crooked they are too, owing to the yielding subsoil of salt. Moreton Old Hall (1559) and Gawsworth (also of the sixteenth century), two of the best known examples, are both in Cheshire ; Speke Hall, that haunt of owls (1490 with later additions), is only just over the Lancashire border. Hall i' the Wood, with its attractive name (1583 with later additions) is in Lancashire likewise. But, although these are the more celebrated timber houses, it must not be thought that this convenient and very native style was limited to those two north-western counties. Humbler examples are to be found all over the country, in the yeoman's house, the farmhouse, and the labourer's cottage ; in the village streets also, their tigerish gables overhanging the little shop windows below. It would be difficult to single any out of the many thousand for special mention. Stoneacre at Otham in Kent, Paycocks at Coggleshall in Essex (*circa* 1500, in interesting mixture of brick and beams), but the number is legion. They have their charm, especially when the plaster work is decorated, or, more correctly, "pargetted", by the comb of the local craftsman ; it is a charm which is entirely indigenous and countrified ; and to inhabit one of these roughly put together old houses is rather like living in an old ship : it creaks



PARHAM OLD HALL, SUFFOLK  
Water colour by W. C. Stanfield

in a high wind, it creaks and leaks and yields, but one has the feeling of being very closely associated with the elements, as though one were on the sea or living in a tree-top, no bad analogy since these rural dwellings were as a matter of course constructed out of the oaks that could be cut down on the local soil. Much of the charm is lost when we come to the over-enriched specimens such as Gawsworth and Moreton Old Hall, where the simple craft becomes self-conscious. It was not an art that ought ever to have been over-elaborated.

Brickwork is a different question. Brick is in itself a more sophisticated form of building, a matter for the architect to deal with rather than for the carpenter and the plasterer. Much beautiful brickwork is to be found in England, but in this paragraph I want especially to mention a certain definite type of gatehouse which happened in East Anglia. Strange tall towers got put up; they were almost skyscrapers some of them. Layer Marney (1500-1523) rose to eight storeys in the cold east Essex air; Oxburgh Hall, in Norfolk (1482); Gifford's Hall, in Suffolk (early sixteenth century); the Deanery at Hadleigh, in Suffolk (fifteenth century); Gedding Hall, in Suffolk (sixteenth

century) ; Melford Hall, in Suffolk. Parham Old Hall, in Suffolk, has no tall gatehouse, but is beautifully built of brick reflected into its moat.

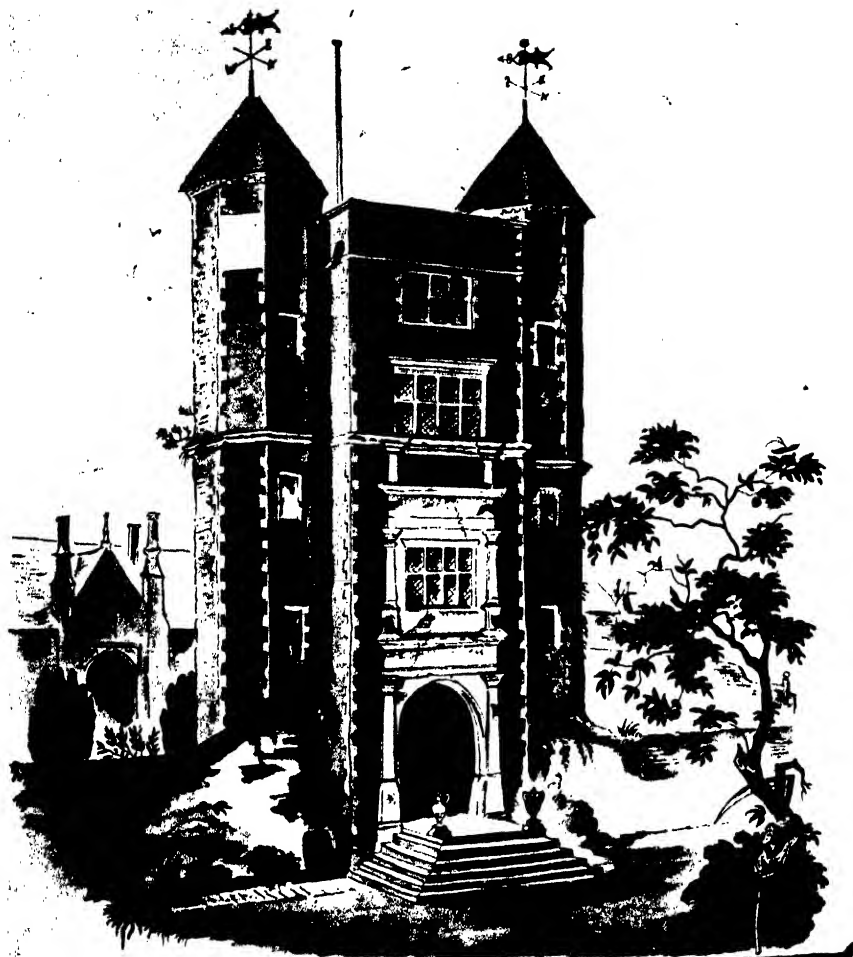
These are the outstanding houses and gatehouses in East Anglia, but it must not be thought that similar gatehouses of brick did not occur elsewhere. We have already mentioned Hurstmonceux Castle, in Sussex. We might add Bolebrook, in Sussex, and Sissinghurst Castle, in Kent.

## VIII

SO far I have said little about the interiors of these English houses. I now seem to have arrived at the point where I might usefully say something. I think the characteristic is that the inside has "grown" in the same way as the outside has grown. There is no question of a "period" room, so beloved of professional decorators. Everything is muddled up. You may find Jacobean panelling, Chippendale tables, Chinoiserie wall-papers, Carolean love seats, Genoa velvets, Georgian brocades, Burgundian tapestries, Queen Anne embroideries, William-and-Mary tallboys, Elizabethan bread cupboards, and even Victorian sideboards, all in such a mixture as to make the purist shudder. There was no such thing as a purist period-room decoration. Every owner acquired furniture, pictures, tapestries, statuary, *au fur et a mesure*, as the taste and fashion of his age suggested. Sometimes the taste of his age was "good," sometimes "bad": there is no Absolute in such matters. Our appreciation depends on the taste and fashion of our own immediate age. We may esteem one style and condemn another. The next generation may reverse all our ideas. Where is the Dictator of Taste to say who is right and who wrong, what is "good" and what is "bad"? All we know is that our ancestors piled up their possessions generation by generation, and somehow managed to create a whole which is far more of a whole than any whole deliberately composed.

It must be admitted that the inclination of the Elizabethan and Jacobean craftsman was to over-do their imagination. The excitement of that adventurous age tended to express itself too exuberantly. The *debordement* of the Italian Renaissance expressed itself in England not only by an overflowing but by an overloading. The English, taking a great deal from Italy, ran away with it. They went wild, they went headstrong. The southern wind of Italian inspiration proved too much for their northern heads. Let us face it: Elizabethan and Jacobean taste could be atrocious, and frequently was. It was never safe, tidy and quiet as the taste of the succeeding century.

Amongst other manifestations of this late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century decoration the characteristic plaster work must not be forgotten.



THE TOWER, SISSINGHURST CASTLE, KENT  
Wash drawing by Roland Pym

The frieze at Hardwick has already been mentioned, and, although it may stand as perhaps the most elaborate example of the art during those years, it must be realised that no great house of the period was without its embossed and pendentive ceilings, its overmantels, its panels, producing an effect of richness like the outpouring of a cornucopia. The palace of Nonesuch, begun in about 1538 for Henry VIII, provided the first example of this Italian craft. I have no space here to go into the development of the plasterer's work in

England, but must content myself by saying that by the middle of the century an enterprising Englishman who had travelled in France and Italy, Charles Williams by name, was taking the monopoly away from the foreign artisans and was offering his services not only to the builder of Longleat but also to Bess of Hardwick herself. This Charles Williams was really the founder of the English school of stuccoists. The fashion caught on ; Hardwick, Haddon, Burton Agnes, Knole, Plas Mawr in Wales, Audley End, Canons Ashby, Broughton, Hatfield, Longleat, Emral Hall, Chastleton Manor, Blickling, Bramshill, Langleys, all became bumpy and bossy. Leaves sprouted ; sprays were flung ; monograms were interlaced ; mermaids, sea-horses, and grape vines twirled their tails and tendrils round the Long Gallery at Burton Constable ; heraldic animals squatted guardant or lifted a paw rampant ; more homely animals, such as the rabbit and the deer, came to life quaintly ; Adam delved beneath his tree ; giants wrestled ; pomegranates were spilled ; arabesques wandered. Ceilings, panels, friezes, all became crowded with a muddle of imagination, poetry, and realism in very much the same way as English literature became crowded with Italian ideas at the same time. It is, I think, worthy of comment that the Tudor age in England should have taken as extravagantly to Italian stucco-work as in literature it took to Italian comedy and tragedy, yet giving a native twist to both.

## IX

**R**OUGHLY speaking, it may be said that our domestic architecture during the seventeenth century became more sophisticated and less picturesque. It was getting itself tidied up. It became neater and more symmetrical. It straggled less. It became more deliberate and intentional, and less haphazard. We calmed down. We lost something ; we gained something. We lost the rich extravagance of youth ; we gained the sobriety of early middle age. We ceased to be twenty and passed into being thirty years old. Architecturally speaking, we ceased to be very young, but were not yet quite grown up.

The difference and change which took place during the first half of the seventeenth century were largely due to the rise of the architects. In July, 1573, a son was born to a clothmaker named Jones. Not an unusual name. The unusual things about this particular young Jones were his genius, which was considerable, and his baptismal name, which was Inigo. He may fairly be called our first professional architect. Before his day the architect (if there was one) had remained anonymous ; the builder had been all-important, probably a local man with a good practical knowledge of his job but very little

## C. C.

generalised theory of what he was doing, who just built according to his native tradition, rather like a bird building its nest. This *naivete* had its charm, and in many instances, as we have seen, the result was pleasing, but Inigo Jones altered all that. He got Lord Pembroke to send him to Italy, and while he was there he made the best use of his time. He discovered amongst other things that the Italians built their palaces and villas according to plan. He discovered, above all, the existence of Palladio.

He came back to England full of these novel ideas. The designer of houses in Italy was an architect, therefore the designer of houses in England should be an architect also ; it should be Inigo Jones.

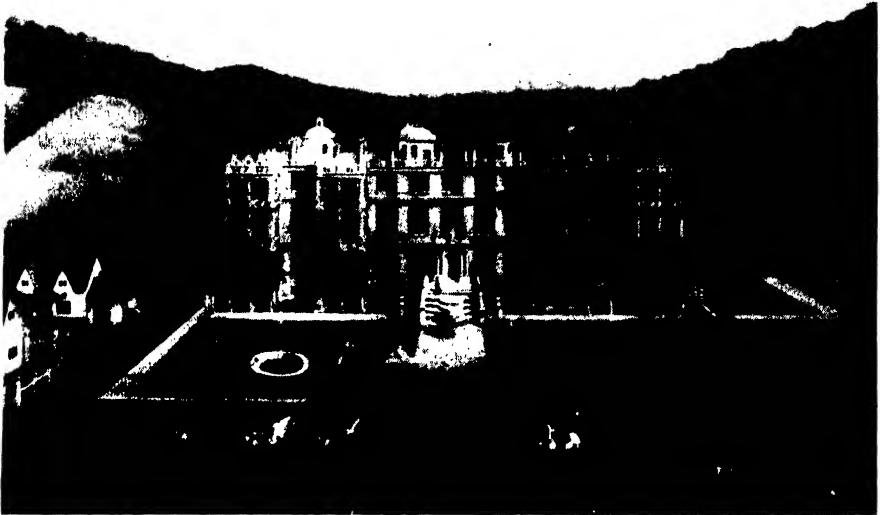
Many country houses claim him, and it would need a whole chapter to argue their separate claims. Some are disputed, others not. Cobham, in Kent, claims him ; the pavilion at Stoke Bruerne, Castle Ashby, Stoke Park and Kirby Hall, all in Northamptonshire ; Forde Abbey, Brympton d'Evercy and Hinton St. George, all in Somerset ; and Raynham, in Norfolk.

In point of fact it is now thought probable that the Banqueting House in Whitehall and the Queen's House at Greenwich must be regarded as the only two buildings which may without question be ascribed to Jones. The fact remains that Jones by his designs and studies exercised the strongest influence over an entire school of followers, such as John Webb, Pratt, Hugh May, Captain Wynne (a Dutchman), and that remarkable adventurer Sir Balthasar Gerbier.

I hope I do not exaggerate the importance of Inigo Jones. He may not have been so great an architect as his master Palladio, nor so great an architect as his successor, Sir Christopher Wren, but at any rate he was responsible for this quietly revolutionary change to which I have alluded, the change which brought the architect into the forefront and pushed the builder back into his proper place. My admiration for him increases when I remember that he put a little note at the end of his copy of Palladio's *Architecture*, a prescription which, he says, cured him of the sharp vomitings he had suffered from for thirty-six years. A man who can suffer from dyspepsia like that and who yet can alter the whole character of English architecture does deserve one's respect.

To the above remarks I must add a qualification. I am aware that it is not entirely correct to claim for Inigo Jones the honour of being our first named and professional architect. I shall be told that I have forgotten John Shute, who as early as 1550 was sent to Italy by the Duke of Northumberland to study architecture ; or Robert Lyminge, the designer or part designer of Hatfield, who had a hand also in the construction of Blickling ; John Thorpe, who was working between 1570 and 1610, and who is associated with Montacute, Burghley House, Longford Castle, and Kirby Hall ; and even Robert Smithson,





VIEW OF LONGLEAT, WILTSHIRE  
Oil painting by Jan Siberechts, 1676

who worked under John of Padua at Longleat, and who may have been responsible for that most deplorable example, Wollaton Hall. But, as has frequently been pointed out, these men were less to be regarded as architects than as surveyors of the work in progress, appointed by the builder-contractor. The truth seems to be that the functions of designer and surveyor were not sharply divided until the advent of Inigo Jones with his definite theories and foreign experience, and that there is therefore no need to nibble anything away from the reputation he has rightly earned.

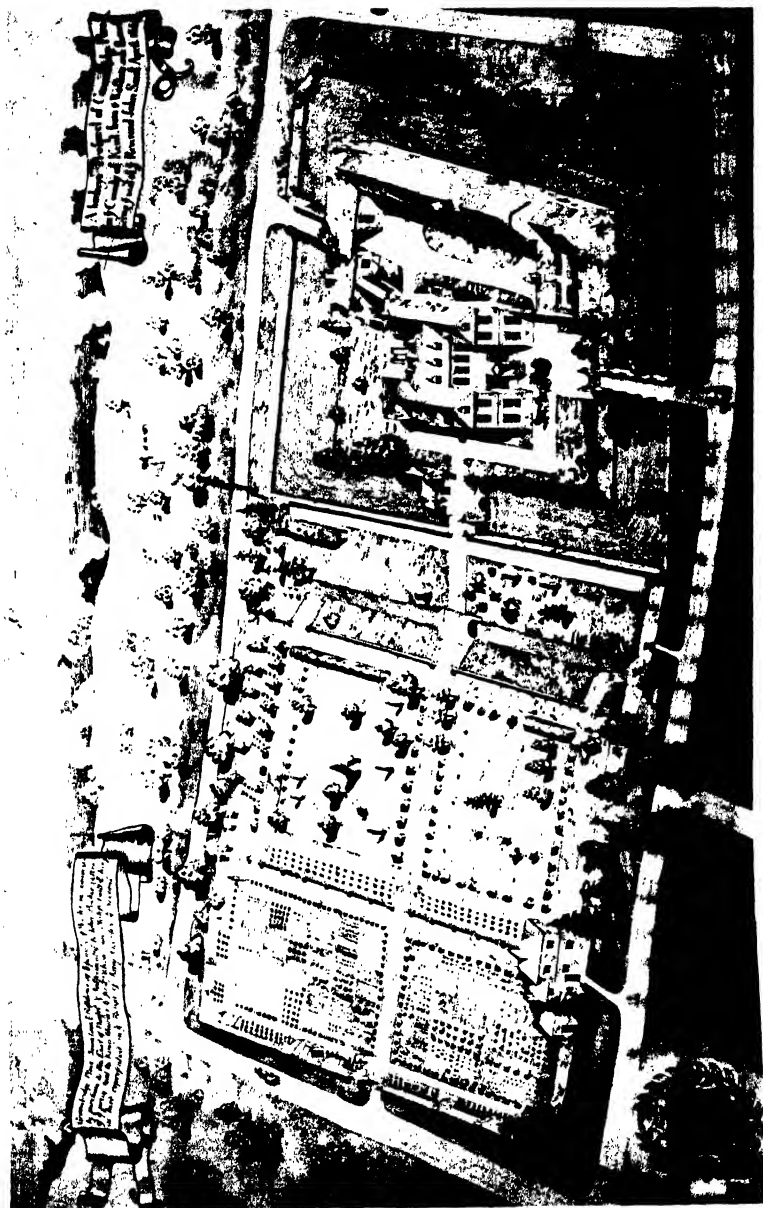
**I**T is not difficult to define the outstanding differences between the so-called Tudor house and the progeny begotten directly or indirectly by Inigo Jones. The difference is startling because Jones, instead of allowing the slow growth to take its usual way in England, abruptly imposed the real innovations he had brought back from Italy. The idiom of one country always startles when it first appears in another. The big sash windows, regularly spaced, the columns and pilasters, porticos and pediments, the straight lines, the symmetry and unity of such houses as Tyttenhanger, in Hertfordshire



SQUERRIES COURT, WESTERHAM, KENT  
Oil painting by Roland Pym

(1654), Ramsbury, in Wiltshire (about 1680), or Squerries Court, in Kent (1680), demonstrate the difference between the sixteenth century and the seventeenth. The wildly adolescent experiments fade out ; they are replaced by deliberately planned constructions, satisfying to the eye, convenient to live in, *classic* rather than *romantic*, to use two accepted though ill-defined words. Actually, no one knows who introduced the sash-window into England, or at what date. The first mention of them occurs in accounts for work at Windsor Castle between 1686–88. This is all the more curious, as few features did more to alter the character of external architecture or the façade of the house.

Once again, having turned over this fresh page of English domestic architecture, it is still important to remember that the period was one of transition and that an outstanding trait of the English character is a love of compromise. Violent changes have never been part of our make-up. It was much more in our nature either to preserve certain features to which we had long been accustomed and to adapt and modify them gradually, or else to tack the new ideas on to the existing building and hope for the best. Examples of the former method may be seen at Swakeley's in Middlesex and at Broome Park in Kent, two houses which may well be compared since they are contemporary, i.e. about 1638. The Tudor influence is still to be observed in



GROOMBRIDGE PLACE, KENT, AS IT WAS IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II  
Line and wash drawing by C. E. Kempe, 1884

the exterior gables and also in the H-shaped plan of both. The English were loth to give up their gables and recesses for the flatter perspectives dear to the importers of the Palladian style. Equally reluctant were they wholly to scrap their buildings in the native idiom in favour of the new-fangled ideas from Italy and France ; rather, they would add as they had always added, and thus you get places such as Brympton where the so-called Inigo Jones garden-front is just-round-the-corner from the Tudor entrance-front. These are only instances which could be multiplied.

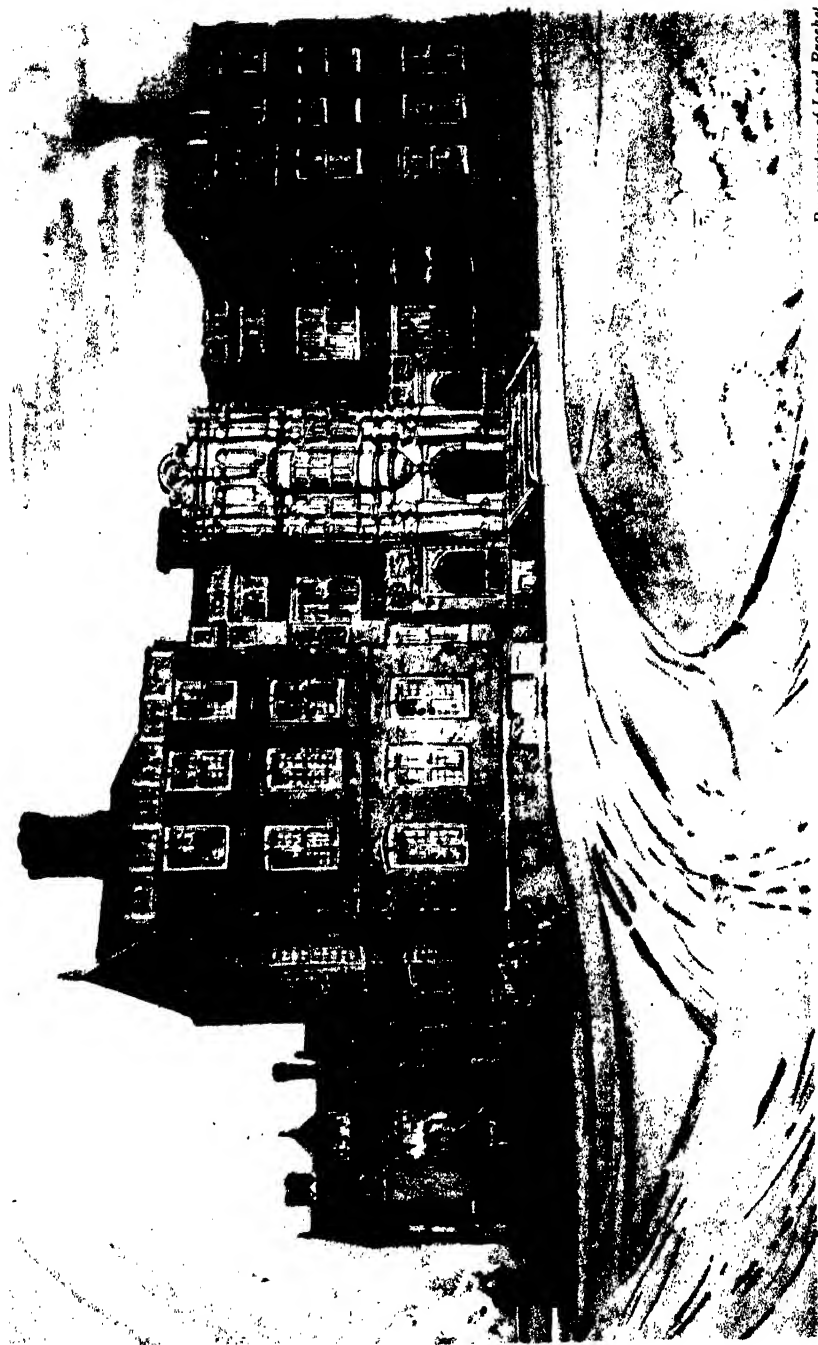
I might mention also an example of the new, neat house built on the older site in conjunction with older but separate buildings. For this I should choose Groombridge Place, which stands with one foot in Kent and the other in Sussex, one foot in the sixteenth, the other in the late seventeenth century. Here it is possible to say that the moat and outbuildings are purely "romantic," the house itself purely "classic," with its Doric columns and the symmetry of its wings and centre. In this combination it manages to retain something of the old manor house charm, with the comfortable convenience of the well-proportioned theories introduced by Inigo Jones, continued by John Webb, and extended by Sir Christopher Wren.

The name of Wren (1632-1723) is traditionally associated with the building of Groombridge Place, but it so happens that a curious analogy exists between him and Inigo Jones : although they both exercised the deepest influence over the design of our country houses, neither Jones nor Wren was employed in building them. As we have seen, no country house can with any certainty be ascribed to Jones, and when we come to consider the career of Wren as an architect we find that his work was entirely urban. It is doubtful even if he may be credited with Belton, in Lincolnshire, or if he designed the wings at Easton Neston, in Northamptonshire (wings which in any case were subsequently pulled down), or was connected with Chatsworth itself. True, many drawings and elevations for houses from his pencil exist, but these remain in the realm of imagined things and never found their expression in brick or stone.

On the other hand, a whole posse of architects crowd on the heels of the two masters, whose practical achievement in the matter of country seats was greatly in excess of theirs. The profession of an architect is in one respect a curious and rather sad one : so far as public fame goes, it is almost invariably anonymous. It seems unfair, and for this reason let us attach the names of these neglected men to the names of the great houses they raised.

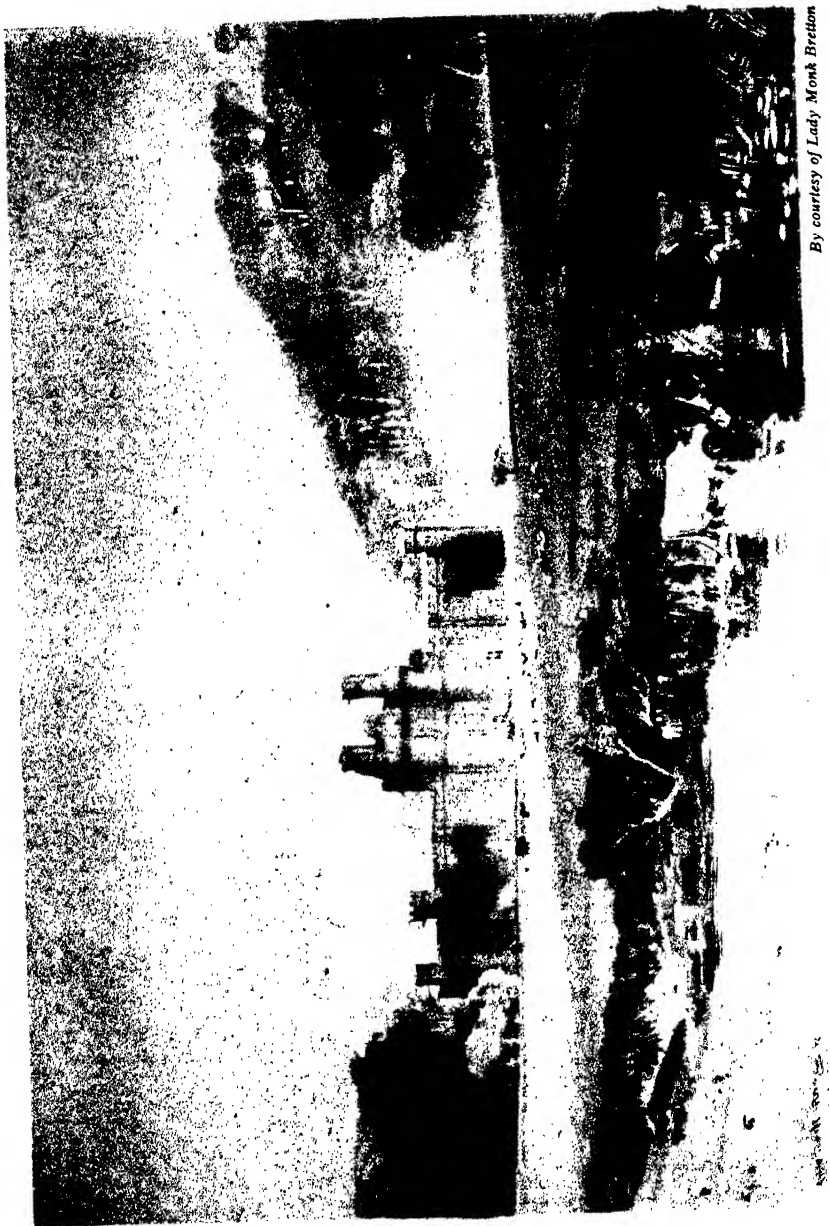
As we approach the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, the structures which we encounter do indeed deserve to be called great, in magnitude if not always in beauty. I have already mentioned

John Webb, that underestimated colleague and son-in-law of Inigo Jones, who built Ramsbury in Wiltshire, Thorpe in Northamptonshire, may have altered Petworth House and the Vyne, and worked in collaboration with Jones in what is probably the noblest room in the country, the famous Double Cube at Wilton. Webb, however, should not be classed with those overloaders of the English earth to whom we shall come in a moment ; nor, perhaps, should Nicholas Hawksmoor, whose major work at Easton Neston, in Northamptonshire, shows a restrained, dignified exterior entirely in the new fashion, with flat roofs, spacious windows, square angles, flattened pilasters. Hawksmoor deserves all the more credit for this sobriety, for he belongs to a generation later than Webb (his Easton Neston, for instance, was built between 1702 and 1713, whereas Webb's Thorpe Hall was about fifty years earlier), and Webb himself was eventually more influenced by Vanbrugh than by Wren, whose assistant he had been. Even so late as 1722 it was possible for men to be building " big " houses, and yet keeping them within reasonable bounds ; witness Colin Campbell, who put up Houghton, in Norfolk, for Sir Robert Walpole at that date. Campbell was also responsible for Mereworth, in Kent (1720). Mereworth deserves mention in these pages not because it is a typical English house but because it is so very much the reverse, a freak, a unique instance of a house built entirely on the Italian model, a replica in fact of Palladio's famous Villa Capra, near Vicenza. The only other house in England which might be compared with Mereworth was a villa at Chiswick designed by Robert Boyle, Earl of Burlington (1695-1753) for his own occupation. This Lord Burlington is an interesting character. An aristocrat by birth, living in an age when it was fashionable for the nobility to patronise the arts, he seems to have cared for architecture for its own sake, not merely as the pastime of a rich man. The drawings of Palladio were published at his expense and so were the drawings left by John Webb, entitled *Designs by Inigo Jones*. Apart from these various publications, which had an extensive influence on the taste of the day, Lord Burlington, with his wealth and amateur enthusiasm, was able to set up as the patron of a group of professional architects, of whom the most renowned were William Kent and Giacomo Leoni, the respective designers of Holkham and Moor Park. So great was Lord Burlington's belief in the ability of William Kent, whom he had " discovered " in Rome, that not only did he house him at Burlington House during his lifetime, but buried him in his family vault after his death. It was perhaps a pity that Lord Burlington should not have contented himself with his publications and his benefactions, but must needs practise the art himself, for his value as a patron was greater than his value as an architect. Lord Chesterfield made a disobliging comment on a house which Lord



*By courtesy of Lord Brockel*

BRAMSHILL PARK, HAMPSHIRE  
Water colour by Garnet Wolsley



*By courtesy of Lady Monk Bretton*

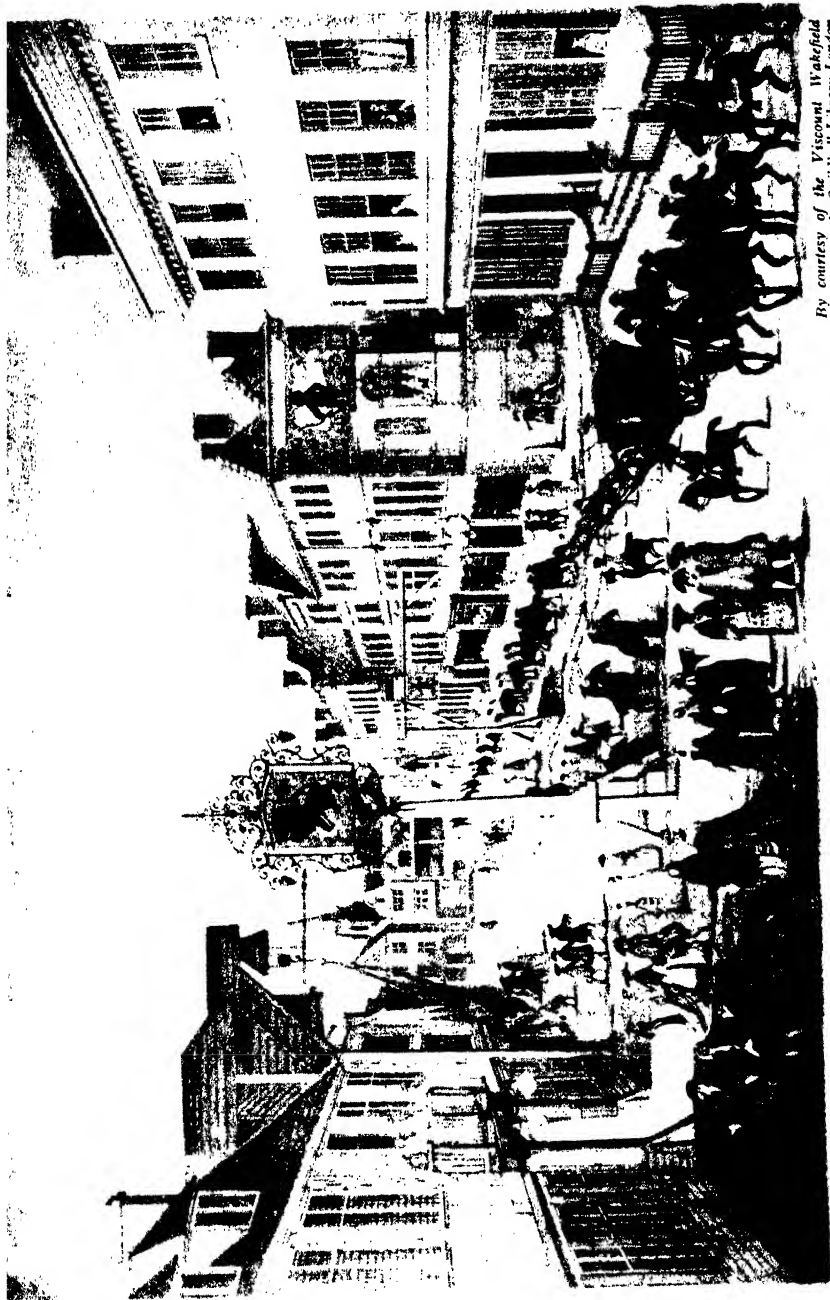
HURSTMONCEUX CASTLE, SUSSEX  
Water colour by J. M. W. Turner



LACOCK ABBEY, WILTSHIRE  
Water colour by Roland Pym

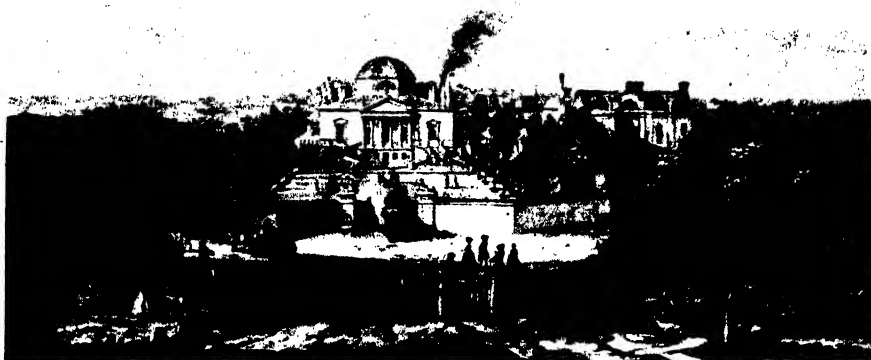
*By courtesy of the Artist and Miss Lubou Krassin*





By courtesy of the Viscount Wakefield  
Collection in the Guildhall Library London

JUDGES ASSIZE PROCESSION 1762  
Drawn by Ogborne, engraved by Rowlandson

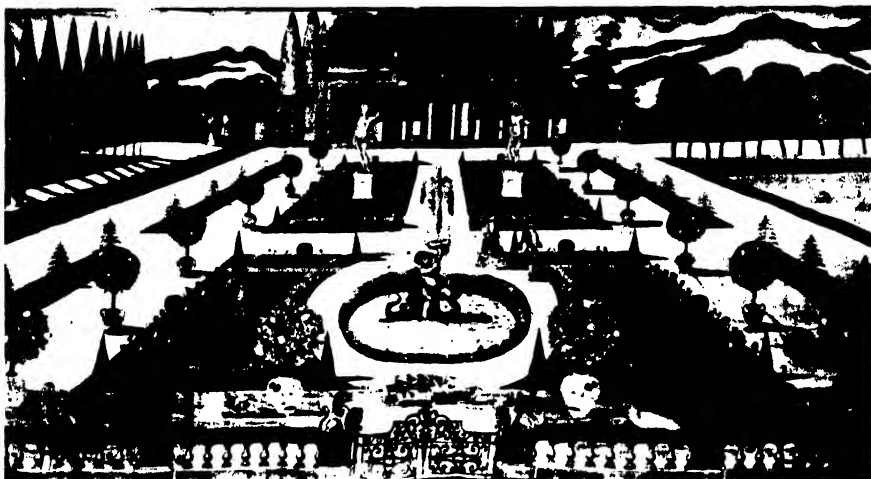


LORD BURLINGTON'S VILLA AT CHISWICK  
Pen and brush drawing by Jacques Rigaud

Burlington had designed for the famous military roadmaker General Wade : he said that if the General's house was impossible to live in for his comfort, he would be well advised to take a house opposite and look at it.

This may have been a fair comment on the house Lord Burlington wanted to build for General Wade, but I cannot feel it is a fair comment on the middling houses of that period, the period which includes such houses as Ditchley, in Oxfordshire, built by James Gibbs in 1722 ; or Reigate Priory, in Surrey, or Ven House, in Somerset (*circa* 1700), Honington Hall, in Warwickshire (*circa* 1680), Reddish Manor, in Wiltshire, Widcombe Manor House, near Bath, two anonymous houses contemporaneous (1736) with the Woods, father and son, the architects of Prior Park, near Bath, and of many finely designed streets and squares in Bath itself. To this period also belonged Stoke Edith, in Herefordshire, destroyed by fire some years ago. This was built between 1697 and 1699 to the order of Thomas Foley, the son of a nail manufacturer. Foley became Speaker of the House of Commons, and the house remained in the possession of his family. The five successive wives of a later Thomas Foley embroidered the wall hanging showing the design of a formal garden (*circa* 1740) worked by these patient ladies. The house in the background is probably intended as a representation of Stoke Edith itself. One wonders how much and in what spirit each one of them speculated on her predecessor as she stitched ?

The middling houses of England during this period, say, 1670 to 1780, may be counted among the most quietly charming, convenient, and decent



PANEL OF PETIT POINT FROM STOKE EDITH, HEREFORDSHIRE

houses ever built. Decent, I think, is the adjective they best deserve. They are unassuming. They are as quiet as the country squire and the country existence where they belonged. They take their place, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as opposite numbers to the Gothic or early Tudor or Elizabethan or Jacobean muddles which preceded them. They belong to an England which, architecturally, was beginning to grow up.

Many things might be said about these middling houses, but the chief thing to be said is that they accommodate themselves well into the English landscape. This characteristic of the English country house was one of the first things I tried to emphasise at the beginning of this monograph, and now, as I arrive into the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, I must emphasise once more the peculiar genius of the minor English house for fitting into its surroundings. The castle, the pseudo-castle, the Tudor house, the Jacobean house, they all fitted in. The only time when they went wrong was whenever they outgrew their native idiom and swelled beyond the small vernacular adapted to their small island. England is not an exciting country, considered in terms of landscape. We have no dramatic mountain ranges, no grand valleys, no enormous splits in our earth compared with the canyons of Arizona. We have no extravagant climatic or geological accidents such as typhoons, hurricanes or earthquakes. We have no extremes of climate; we are never much too cold or much too hot. This moderation reflects itself in our temperament. We are not excessive in any direction, and this lack of exaggeration which is both the strength and the weakness of our racial make-up, this

sense of proportion, this Englishness which exasperates those born with a more excitable, more Latin nature, finds its expression in our national architecture.

The moderation of the English temperament thus found something satisfactory to itself in the neat and tidy houses born of the new fashion. It may seem curious that the grandeur of the Italian model should ever have accommodated itself to the exigencies of the English Cathedral Close, the English small country town, the English village street, the English parkland and the squire's estate. Yet so it was. We took the style and broke it down to our own needs. Once again we took something from Italy. As in literature our Elizabethan poets took extravagant Italian romances and piled-up murders and then turned them into dramas of the English stage, so, later, in terms of architecture, did we take and adapt the Italian classical tradition to our own mild requirements. We tempered it, and on this principle I think one may safely say that the smaller houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries adapted themselves to requirements of decency and convenience quite as well as the sixteenth century English house adapted itself to the more romantic requirements of its own day. To pass through England with such considerations always present in the mind, trying them out on every example encountered, is to double the interest and amusement and speculation which such a journey provokes. It is not enough mildly to enjoy the pleasant frontages we espy over the hedge or as our motor car travels along the streets of villages and little towns. Pleasant indeed they are, with their porticos and pediments, bay-windows and sash-windows, and all they offer of agreeable rooms within: rooms largely and calmly panelled in ivory-painted wood, with alcoves for china-shelves scooped into the walls, elegant Chinese Chippendale chairs and writing-tables nicely disposed, chintzes on the arm-chairs and sofas; in short, not the homes of the grand nobility nor of the *nouveaux-riches* of that day, but the homes either of the country gentry or the middle-class, the quiet, solid English upper middle-class, the doctors and the solicitors and the archdeacons, *hommes de robe* rather than *hommes d'épée*. *Hommes de robe de chambre*. Tame, it may be said. True; but the English are always tame until they become fierce. They prefer being tame to fierce.

The interest of driving through England is enhanced if we drive in this noticing spirit. It is amusing to guess at the date of the little house we pass and then to verify our guess by the guide-book or subsequent enquiry. It is salutary to discover how far out we may be in our reckoning. The earlier centuries may well bewilder us with their congeries and conglomerations, but in this later period we must take shame if, nine times out of ten, the deliberate design does not proclaim its reign.

**B**UT these generalisations must suffice, and from the agreeable small middling house we must pass on to the monsters of construction which provoked the poet to exclaim :

“ ‘ Thanks, sir,’ I cried, ‘ tis very fine,  
But where d’ye sleep or where d’ye dine ?  
I find by all you have been telling,  
That ‘tis a house, but not a dwelling.’ ”

The name of Vanbrugh (1663-1726) has already once been mentioned, and its enormous shadow darkens the pages. Colossal, charmless, graceless, his achievement cannot be denied the quality of magnificence, but the present writer may not be alone in regretting that its scope could not be limited to the erection of public buildings in our cities instead of loading our counties with incongruous palaces. Supposing the employment of Vanbrugh and Inigo Jones could be reversed. No one would wish to forego Jones’ work at Whitehall, but the thought of the country houses that Jones might also have built is too tantalising to be considered. Conversely, what county halls, what government offices, what theatres and opera houses, what pump-rooms, what colleges, might all have come from Vanbrugh’s sketch-book ! It is almost (not quite) as tantalising as the vision of a London laid out by Wren.

Instead of the municipal work with which Vanbrugh might so well have been charged, we have to thank the private patron for most examples of his alarming genius. The Duke of Ancaster at Grimsthorpe, in Lincolnshire ; the Earl of Manchester at Kimbolton, in Huntingdon ; Sir Edward Southwell at King’s Weston, in Gloucestershire ; the painter, Sir Godfrey Kneller, at Whitton Hall, near Hounslow ; the Earl of Suffolk at Audley End, in Essex ; Lord Cobham at Stowe, in Buckinghamshire ; and, above all, the Earl of Carlisle at Castle Howard, in Yorkshire (partially destroyed by fire in November, 1940), were among those who secured the services of this architect, who was not really a trained architect at all but a dramatist by profession. I cannot here relate the extraordinary career of Vanbrugh, and must only observe that it would be surprising were Mr. Noel Coward suddenly to take to architecture and begin erecting some of the most ambitious piles of masonry ever put together in this country. It was Lord Carlisle who was first responsible for setting Vanbrugh off on this second half of his career ; Lord Carlisle who, round about the year 1700, entrusted him with the construction of Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, to replace the old castle of Henderskelf on a neighbouring site. It seems likely that Castle Howard was intended as a rival to the enormous palace of Chatsworth, in Derbyshire, which William Talman was engaged in raising



CASTLE HOWARD, YORKSHIRE  
Oil painting by William Marlow

for the Duke of Devonshire. It is comforting to reflect that Castle Howard was never quite so large as Vanbrugh intended it to be. Its tremendous façade, rounded off by cupolas, is surely enough to satisfy the most liberal taste, but Vanbrugh had dreamt of something more. He got his chance at Blenheim, where the resources of the British Treasury were (as he believed) at his disposal in the gift the nation wished to offer the victorious Duke of Marlborough. "England's biggest house for England's biggest man."

Perhaps as this essay is supposed to be concerned only with houses that are still inhabited I ought not to mention Seaton Delaval in Northumberland, which to my mind is the jewel of Vanbrugh's work. Partially burnt in 1822 when the jackdaws' nests in a chimney caught fire, derelict now, cracked by underground tunnelling, and blackened by the grime of the coal country, Seaton Delaval, with its fat columns and finely proportioned side-wings, has all the grand manner in miniature. It is a sad place; the grass grows rough where it should be a sward, and in the central hall where nothing echoes but one's own footsteps, the leprous plaster hangs loosely above the niches and the broken statues of Music, Painting, Geography, Sculpture, Architecture and Astronomy. Inevitably one sees in Seaton Delaval the prophecy of a fate which may await many other houses, not indeed due to the geographical accident of coal-mining, but to the deeper cause of social and economic adjustment.

I HAVE alluded, perhaps too violently, to the lack of grace and charm in the works of Vanbrugh. Vanbrugh never catered for such qualities as grace and charm; he supplied only the demand for magnificence exacted by his own day. If ever there was a clumsy genius with flashes of a lighter inspiration, that was Vanbrugh. No such charge of clumsiness can be brought against the brothers Adam, who succeed him chronologically in the list of English architects. The brothers Adam were elegant and delicate in the extreme. The most surprising thing about them is that they were brothers, not sisters. There were four of them, Robert, James, John, and William. Robert (1728-1792) and his brother James, who was associated with him in all his works, are the two that count. They delighted in the lighter classical mould: niches, lunettes, bas-reliefs, chimney-pieces, and furniture designed to match the outside building. Elegant both inside and out, the Adam brothers imposed quite as strongly as Inigo Jones a new style on the English house. It is idle to speak here of Osterley, near Brentford, or of Kenwood, near Hampstead, since neither of these places can now be called country houses in the right sense of the term, but fortunately the work of the Scottish brothers flowed also over the provinces. There is Kedleston, in Derbyshire (one of the many houses of the late Lord Curzon), where Robert Adam succeeded James Paine; Nostell Priory, in Yorkshire, and Compton Verney, in Warwickshire. The Grecian gracefulness flowered in rooms finely proportioned but delicately coloured as the egg of a bird. Primrose and Wedgwood blue, lemon-yellow and cream, pale green and white, it seems strange that this highly original and sophisticated style should have been the product of Scotland and Diocletian's palace at Spalato.

Not all the architects working contemporaneously with the Adam brothers observed the same restraint. The gigantic ambitions of Vanbrugh and his patrons were only too faithfully carried on in the eighteenth century by Flitcroft, Leoni, and Kent. We have already mentioned Kent and Leoni as protégés of the munificent Lord Burlington. Henry Flitcroft must be recorded as the author of that tremendous load Wentworth Woodhouse (1740), in Yorkshire, and Woburn Abbey, in Bedfordshire. Of such houses I cannot do better than quote the words of a modern architect, words which were, in fact, applied to Vanbrugh himself, but which are just as applicable here: "How different is this effect from that of even the largest of the Elizabethan palaces! There, grandeur itself was homely. The difference cannot be attributed to increase in size; the absence of homeliness springs not even from the inevitable

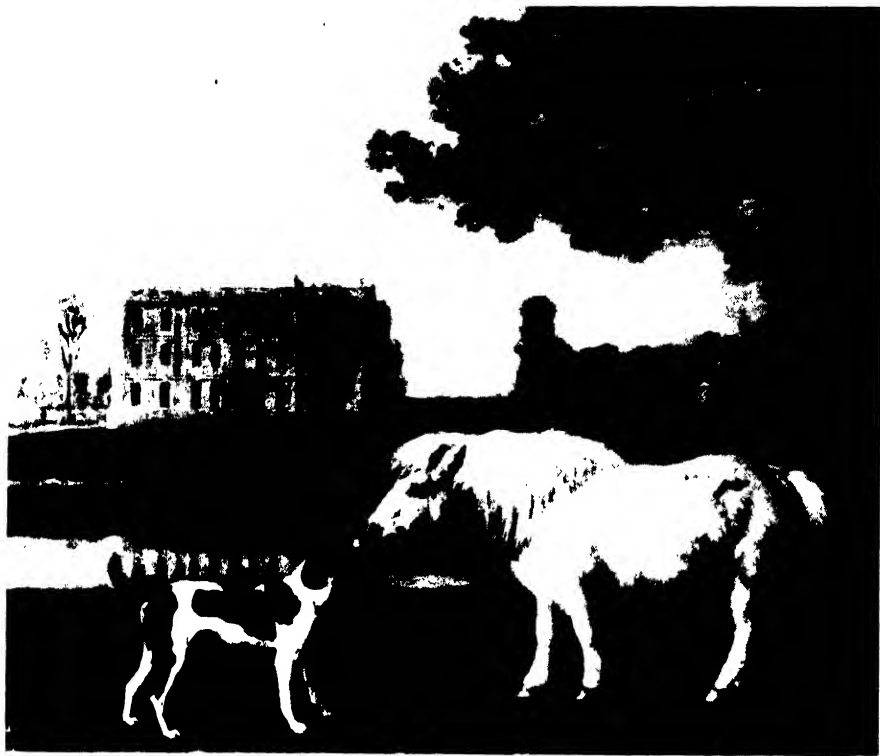
difference between a palace and a manor-house. It is inherent in the changed views prevalent both as to life and as to architecture."

These words, I think, sum up the change which we have watched taking place between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth. Just as men grew heavier and more self-indulgent, so did their homes extend themselves into a pomposity different from the dashing Elizabethan spirit which built as it chose, and added and straggled and thought more of comfort than of impressiveness. The poetry of the sixteenth century was gone, and in the place of its gables and finials, its fantasy and its mistakes, its gaiety and its extravagance, stood the solid Hanoverian England of the Georges.

### XIII

THIS essay draws to an end, for it is surely not necessary to give more than a passing mention to the freak architecture of the Gothic Revival. This remarkable style, however successful in Sir Charles Barry's Houses of Parliament (1840), proved ludicrously unsuited to the English counties. Many attempts have been made to explain this return to the spikes and battlements of another age ; it has been blamed on Sir Walter Scott whose own home, Abbotsford, supplies a perfect example, and on Lord Byron whose family place, Newstead Abbey, happened to reflect the popular conception of his wild career. The romances of the one, the poems and personality of the other. . . . It is not to be denied that the arts, as usual, were striding hand in hand ; but instead of attributing too much influence to literature over architecture, it is as well to remember that both were equally susceptible to the indefinable breath of the spirit of the age. It would indeed be possible to make out a case for architecture being the first in the field. For Nicholas Hawksmoor as early as 1735 had raised Gothic towers at Westminster Abbey ; in 1747 Horace Walpole had taken a lease of his famous villa at Strawberry Hill, and other seemingly paradoxical instances might be cited. It seems more reasonable, after paying due tribute to the *Zeitgeist*, to remark that men were becoming bored by the staid houses which had succeeded the introduction of the classic tradition. They were safe, but they were dull. And so very soon it happened that James Wyatt (1746-1813) was building Fonthill Abbey for Beckford, the author of *Vathek*, probably the most surprising construction that ever startled an English county ; with his nephew Jeffry he was building Ashridge, in Hertfordshire. Charles Barry was experimenting at Toddington Manor, in Gloucestershire, with the dentated pinnacles that reappeared ten years later on his Palace of Westminster. The Pugins, father and son, by





BROCKLESBY HALL, LINCOLNSHIRE, 1777  
Oil painting by G. Stubbs

their publications greatly encouraged public taste in the Gothic direction, and at Alton Towers, in Staffordshire, the younger Pugin completed for the Earl of Shrewsbury a dwelling which might more fitly have been placed as a gate-house in the walls of Nuremberg.

This desire to escape from the respectable and rather box-like fashion found its expression not only in mediæval turrets, baronial halls, ecclesiastical-looking windows, battlements, machicolations and spires, but also in a variety of other styles which make the beholder rub his eyes and wonder if England once went mad. Nothing came amiss by way of a change. At least one house, Grange Park, in Hampshire, was put up as an almost exact reproduction of a Greek temple; Roman, Egyptian, and Indo-Moorish could also be supplied. Fortunately, none of these fancies enjoyed a very prolonged or extensive vogue, though few of us would welcome the disappearance of that unique oddity, the Pavilion at Brighton, completed in 1820 for the Prince Regent

by John Nash. But enough of this subject, and we may rejoice that the whimsical air of novelty was so soon blown away. Had the same fate attended the later purely Gothic craze, we should be spared much to-day : St. Pancras Station, the Albert Memorial, and streets of gabled villas with stained glass in the doors.

Much has been left unsaid. Many noble houses have perforce been omitted, nor have I said a word about the gardens, which to most people's minds are inseparable from the picture of the English home.

The foregoing notes postulate that both the author and the reader care deeply for the things which have been herein described, in the same sense as lovers of music, painting, literature care for those things and all that they imply. But at the close of a survey of this kind, however incomplete, however telescoped, one must ask oneself what the future holds ; ask it with sorrow, for the future is indeed unpromising. Even before the war the prospect was dark enough, but with war taxation and the present rate of death duties it seems improbable that any family fortune will long suffice to retain such homes in private ownership. Fortunate are those who inherit houses of manageable size, but what of those who carry the beloved burden of unreasonably spacious halls ? A large house does not necessarily mean a large income, although many people seem to be under that delusion. The obligations, the responsibilities, and the expense, however, are always large. First there is the value of beauty in an increasingly ugly world.

If these English houses of ours were all to be turned into institutional buildings, schools, asylums, hotels and the like, something of our national heritage of pride and beauty would be gone. Museums ? A museum is a dead thing ; a house which is still the home of men and women is a living thing which has not lost its soul. The soul of a house, the atmosphere of a house, are as much part of the house as the architecture of that house or as the furnishings within it. Divorced from its life, it dies. But if it keeps its life it means that the kitchen still provides food for the inhabitants : makes jam, puts fruit into bottles, stores the honey, dries the herbs, and carries on in the same tradition as has always obtained in the country. Useful things, practical things, keeping a number of people going throughout the year. So much for the house itself, but there is the outside life too ; the life in which the landlord is a good landlord, assisting his farmers, keeping his cottages in good repair, adding modern labour-saving improvements, remitting a rent in a case of hardship, employing woodmen to cut trees for his own hearth and theirs.

The system was, and is, a curious mixture of the feudal and the communal, and survives in England to-day. One wonders for how long ?



BLenheim PALACE, OXFORDSHIRE  
Water colour by J. M. W. Turner

# ENGLISH GARDENS

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HARRY ROBERTS

## INTRODUCTION

### A PERSONAL NOTE

**G**ARDENERS, and the owners of gardens, are of many kinds. Until comparatively recent times, the English cottager—as well as the English farmer and village parson—though resentful of further intrusions on what long usage had taught him were his natural rights—has nearly always looked on the great landowner, the local squire, and all his possessions, with admiration and respect. Thus it is that, from the days of our early history up to the last half-century or so, by the English Garden has been generally understood the large garden of the well-to-do. The owners of many of these are themselves practical and keen garden-lovers, though they may employ half-a-dozen professionals to do the major part of the physical work involved. But, more often than not, the squire has been quite ignorant of and uninterested in gardening—

looking upon his garden merely as a means of impressing his humbler neighbours and, if possible, of provoking the envy of rival garden-owners. There has thus been afforded great opportunity for active competition between professional head-gardeners ; and it is, in fact, chiefly to them and to a few eccentric employers that the fashions in gardening with which this book is so largely concerned have hitherto been due.

Actually, gardeners of a more modest kind display great differences in the considerations by which they are motivated. Some are simple utilitarians, many being concerned only with the need of growing the maximum of food for their families. Others, less economically hampered, look on the garden not as a means of directly satisfying any sense of beauty, but as an instrument whereby another aesthetic sense—that of flavour and delicacy in fruit and vegetables—may be gratified. Then, again, there are people who use their ground as a sort of botanic garden, their interest in that science being stronger than their sense of architectural fitness. Travellers and explorers have brought back from abroad all

sorts of shrubs, orchids, and other plants ; while intrepid collectors and agents of enterprising commercial firms have searched remote parts of South America, Africa, China, Japan and other countries for new beauties wherewith to enrich English gardens. Many gardeners again, are influenced mainly by memories of some garden with, for them, happy associations ; while yet others are plant-lovers rather than garden-lovers. Poetic and literary associations also play their part. To some extent this explains the centuries-old conflict between the apostles of garden formalism and those of so-called landscapism. The alternate reaction from one to the other through the centuries has been due to the tendency of the more fanatic disciples of each school to carry its dogmas to ridiculous extremes.

In the present century Britain has been engaged in two great wars, conducted on novellines, with novel weapons ; the total effect of which



*DELPHINIUM GRANDIFLORUM*  
Coloured engraving after Roscoe  
From Havell's *Floral Illustrations*, 1831

on gardening in this country is bound to be immense. Already one sees a great reduction in the number of large gardens in private hands. The cultivation of flowers except on the smallest scale, is discouraged, and large estates all over the country are being split up for building development. After the war, nearly all gardens in private hands will be essentially villa gardens or cottage gardens. We shall then see who among us are real gardeners. It is a commonplace of art that beauty and fitness are almost synonyms; and it may be doubted if any garden in which the individuality and true character of the plants grown are not respected and given full scope for expression can ever give rise to that emotion which true beauty evokes. Yet there must be a certain amount of deliberate planning. There must be paths, and we shall find by observation that some arrangements of these paths and of the plants please us more than others. The smaller the garden, in many ways the more important its planning.

For every false note will here assert itself; and, where every yard is within eyesight, distance, affectation and deliberate complexity will be seen for what they are. But never mistake the planning of the garden for its end. Just as the best and most skilfully planned house would be less than nothing were it not adapted to foster healthy and happy human lives, so a garden, whatever may be the architectural skill shown in its designing, will yet be sterile and functionless if it fails to provide a congenial home for the plants which are its true inhabitants. "Of so many sweet floures to chuse the best, it is hard, seeing they be all so good." So speaks the true flower-lover and garden-lover. The greatest joy which a garden can yield is a feeling of restfulness and peace, a feeling which no garden of staring beds and ostentatious



GREAT DAFFODIL  
Engraving from *The Complete Florist*, 1740

splendour can afford, but which is yielded—as by nothing else in the world—by an old-fashioned garden of happy, homely, old-fashioned flowers. By an old-fashioned garden I mean an informal “garden of all sorts of pleasant flowers which our English ayre will permit to be noursed up,” as Parkinson put it; and by old-fashioned flowers I mean Sweet Williams, Carnations or Gilly-flowers, Mignonette, Sweet Peas, Roses and Honeysuckles, “Daffodils, Fritillarias, Iacincthes, Saffron-flowers, Lillies, Flowerdeluces, Tulipas, Anemones, French Cowslips, or Beares eares and such other flowers, very beautifull, delightfull and pleasant.” After the severe, monotonous, formal arrangements which still too often constitute the gardens around some of our finest houses, how interesting and restful it is to stroll round some delightful old garden, where the shape of the beds and borders is not prearranged, where all the soil is occupied, where every plant looks healthy and at home, where every yard brings one a surprise and a fresh interest, where the old walls have growing from their crevices such plants as the Cheddar Pink, Sedums and Sempervivums; where, too, every plant in its glory hides the decay of its predecessor in bloom and shelters the birth of its successor.

It is because I have always had much in common with the gardening cottager that I here venture on a small bit of personal history. This may help the reader to understand what may seem at times an undue bias in my narration of the strictly historical ups and downs of English gardening, for or against some piece of formalism or landscaping.

Most of the “moulding” hours of the first ten years of my life were spent in a roomy, detached house with a large orchard and two spacious high-walled gardens on the lower slopes of the Quantock Hills, a few hundred feet above the fertile valley known as Taunton Vale. At a very early age, I went as a day scholar to a small preparatory school in the village. My school hours made little impression on my “interest.” All my real life, from my fifth or sixth birthday, was spent in my home, the gardens and orchard attached thereto, and the meadows of neighbouring farms.

I used to enjoy co-operating with my mother, who had charge of our flower-garden; accompanying her on occasional excursions to fields where she collected in a basket certain special soils for the culture of fastidious flowers. When I was less than seven years old, I was allotted a small strip of border under a sandstone wall, for my very own, to grow what I liked in. Someone had given me a little book called *Gardening for Children*, with coloured plates of flowers; of a number of these I begged cuttings or seeds from my mother and from neighbours. Later, I came across some little books on the natural history of butterflies, beetles and wild flowers. I soon became interested in all these things, and used to hunt for them in the lanes and ditches. I became a “collector,” and asked my parents if I might have a small, unused room for my “museum.”



THE BLAND AMARYLLIS

Coloured engraving from *Paxton's Flower Garden*, 1851-52

I grew more and more interested in the habits of these plants and animals, and was inclined to look at garden plants from the point of view of their likings and "natural" ways of life ; getting early to the stage at which that celebrated gardener, Canon Ellacombe, eventually arrived ; so that if I found that a plant had spread from its position in the border to the middle of the gravel path, where it was obviously more at home, I preferred rather to change the path, than to disturb the plant. I can truly say that my precocious interest in science and my increasing susceptibility to every sort of human and literary association have left me with a really catholic taste in gardens and in gardening.

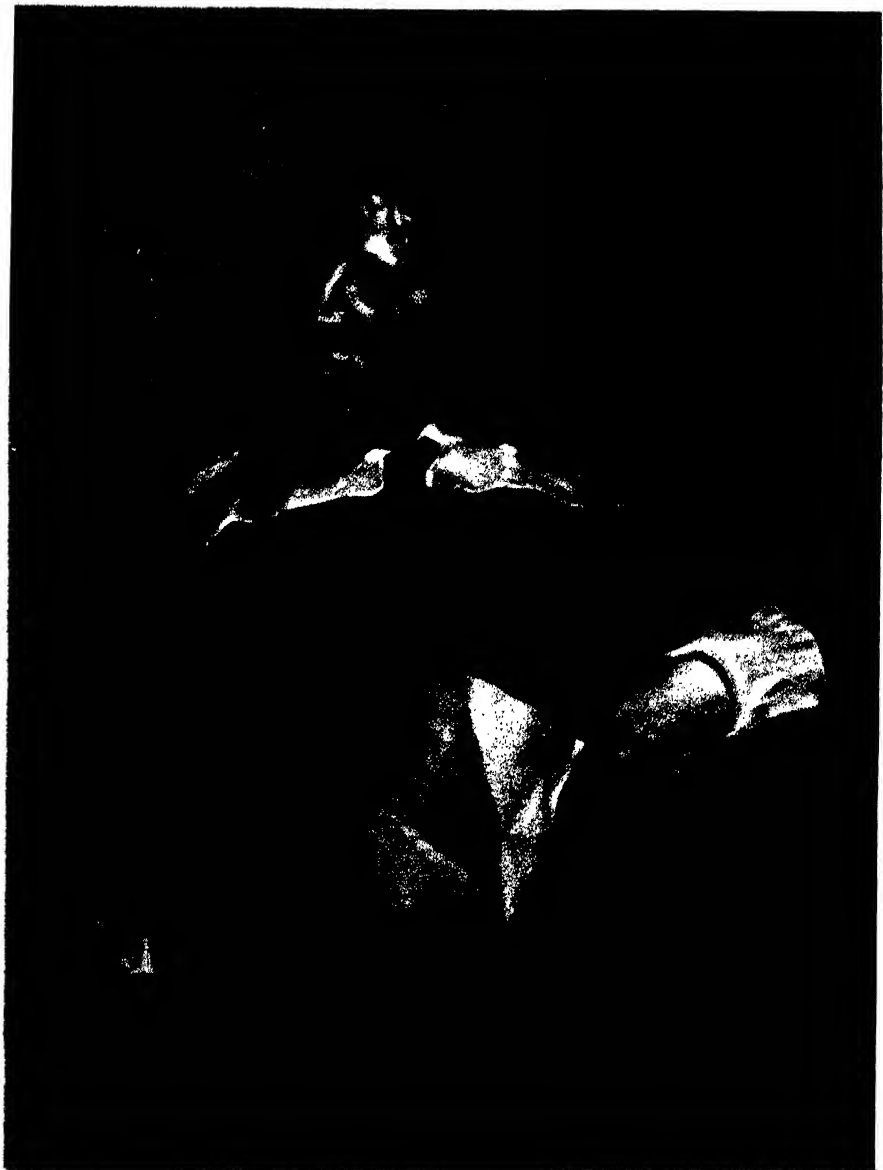
More than forty-five years ago, I contributed a series of articles to *The Gardener's Chronicle*. The fact that Dr. Masters, the critical editor of that admirable paper, *The Times of Horticulture*, as it has been called, considered these articles worthy of a place in his columns, induced me to assemble them in book form, under the title, *The Chronicle of a Cornish Garden*. I sent my manuscript to Mr. John Lane of the Bodley Head, and although it was unlike any books he had previously published—for



the Bodley Head was, of course, associated with such books as the Keynotes Series and *The Yellow Book*, and such artists as Aubrey Beardsley—he decided to bring out my little book, which was, I think, the first volume to be illustrated by that distinguished artist, F. L. B. Griggs. It has been out of print for thirty years or more. In my opening chapter I made it clear that my garden was really a very modest affair, no realisation of the Baconian ideal, but a small piece of ground enclosed by low walls on all sides, and, when I took possession of it a more hopeless, irregular, poverty-struck patch, covered as it was with bindweed, couch-grass and other weeds, it would tax the utmost patience to discover.

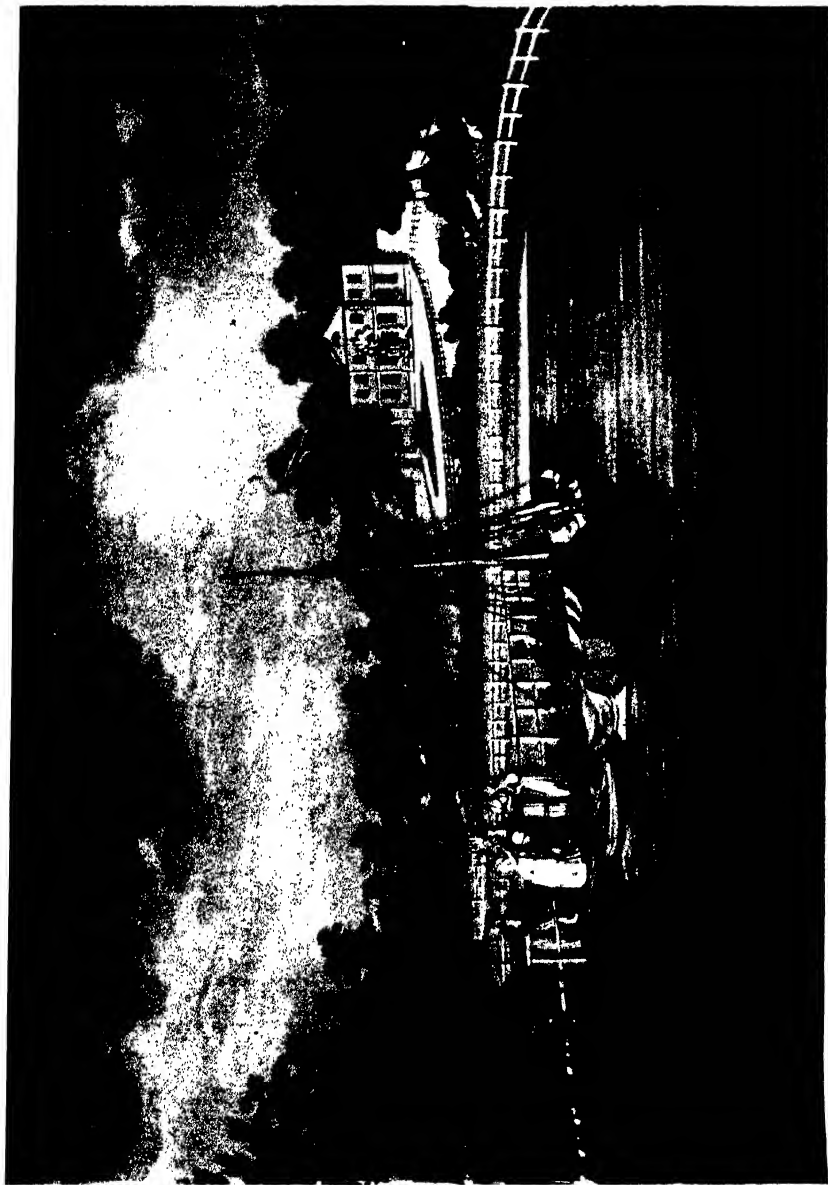
My predecessor took no interest in gardening, and considered the possibilities of the situation not such as to merit much expenditure of time or money. And truly it did look a hopeless task to extract much beauty from it. But I thought of Virgil's contented old Corycian, who acquired possession of a few acres of waste land which was not worth ploughing, of no value for pasturage, and quite useless for vine-growing; yet by steady perseverance and hopefulness this genuine old gardener made things grow everywhere, and was enabled to cover his supper-table with dainties of his own growing. He was always able to pick the earliest rose in spring and the first autumn fruit; and even when winter cracked the ground with frosts, he still had flowers in sheltered nooks with which to cheer himself and nourish his bees.

Unfortunately, I had not even come into a few acres of neglected land, but I saw that, if I were to maintain my interest in gardening and show myself to be a worthy descendant of the veteran of the *Georgics*, I must make the best of what I had until such time as Fate should give me the garden which my mind had ever imaged. So I fortified myself with recollections of pioneers faced with difficulties even greater than mine. Gardening readers will remember Dean Hole's story of the enthusiastic flower-loving navvy who, obtaining the post of gate-keeper on the railway, was provided with nothing but a barren gravel-pit as apology for a garden. "Twelve months afterwards," says the Dean, "I came near the place again—was it a mirage I saw on the sandy desert? There were vegetables, fruit-bushes and fruit-trees, all in vigorous health; there were flowers, and the flower-queen in all her beauty. 'Why, Will,' I exclaimed, 'what have you done to the gravel-bed?' 'Lor bless yer,' he replied, grinning, 'I hadn't been here a fortnight afore I swopped it for a pond!' He had, as a further explanation informed me, and after agreement with a neighbouring farmer, removed with pick and barrow his sandy stratum to the depth of three feet, wheeled it to the banks of an old pond, or rather to the margin of a cavity where a pond once was, but which had been gradually filled up with leaves and silt; and this rich productive mould he had brought home a distance of two hundred yards, replacing it with the gravel, and levelling as per contract."



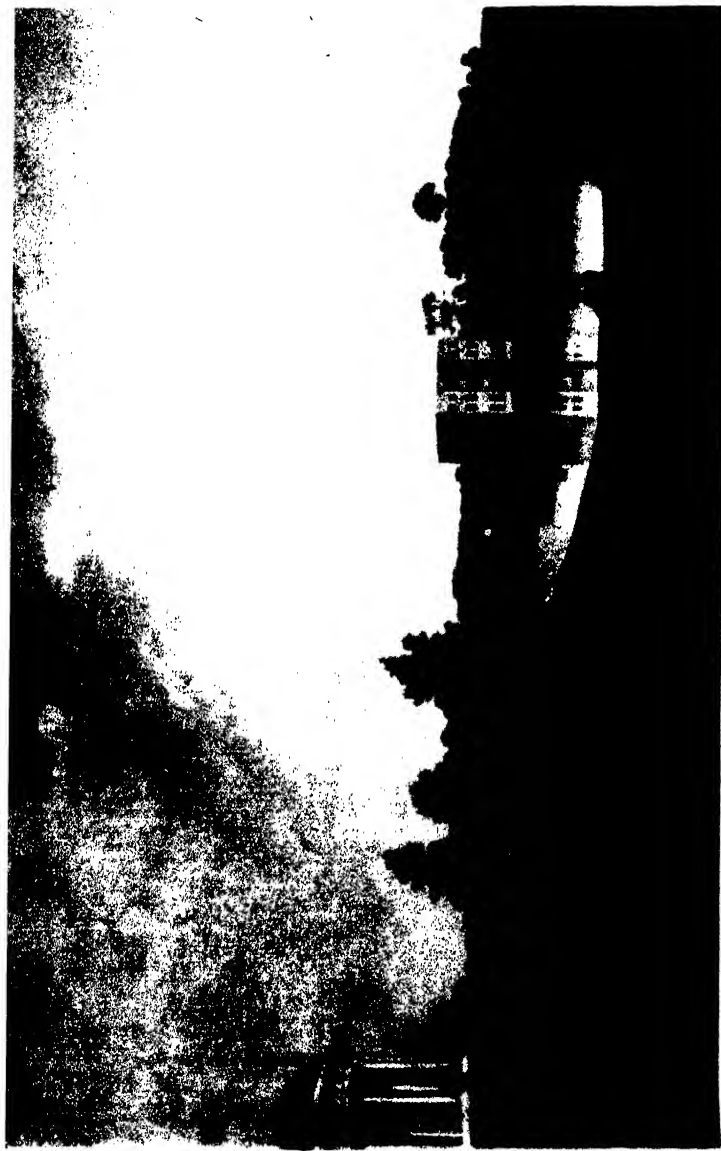
*By courtesy of the Trustees of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich*

INIGO JONES 1573-1652  
Oil painting by William Hogarth



A COUNTRY HOUSE BY THE RIVER  
Water colour by Edward Daye

*By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*



*By courtesy of the National Museum of Wales*

HALSWELL HOUSE AND GROUNDS, SOMERSET  
Oil painting by J. I. Richards, d. 1810



*By courtesy of Mrs. Carline*

A COTTAGE GARDEN AT STAPLEFORD, WILTSHIRE  
Water colour by G. F. Carline, c. 1886



PICKING HONEYSUCKLE  
Water colour by H. D. Copsey

To return to my little garden. First of all, I thoroughly broke up the ground, cleaned it of all weeds as far as possible, and incorporated a heavy dressing of manure. I saw that it was useless to hope that the weeds were conquered, so I decided to grow nothing for a season but vegetable crops, which would necessitate the ground being dug and cleaned a few more times. I took time by the forelock, however, and planted a number of pyramidal fruit-trees in the autumn. Continual forking, digging, manuring and weeding made the soil such as will produce fruit and flowers. Paths were made, and borders naturally were produced; seeds were sown, and bulbs planted; a small greenhouse and frame were built, and the little plot began to look like an adjunct to a human dwelling. As the garden was entirely overlooked by every passing train—the railway arching over the valley on whose slope my garden lay—I planted standard fruit and other trees to cut off that view as far as may be. You see, I am English and like to ply my hobby in privacy. For I hold that a garden is a place whither one should be able to retire from the *profanum vulgus*—like a

private study, like even silence itself, in that we may thence defy the outside world. This is an aim which the true gardener should bear ever in mind. The grandeur and glory of the forest, the hill and the plain, are quite other than anything which the garden can give. This is as certain as the truth that no library can serve as a real substitute for the world of men.

The profound emotion that we term melancholy, which grand scenery induces, is usually absent from the garden effect. Gardening, on the other hand, is calculated to breed in its devotees a feeling of quiet contentment, mainly—we may suppose—because it is constantly telling the gardener of his power in obtaining desired and beautiful results. Fully as much as angling, gardening is truly “the contemplative man’s recreation.” Raising giant flowers for competition at flower-shows is scarcely the sort of thing I mean. The gardening which attracts me is on a footing with old Isaac Walton’s fishing. I like to be my own gardener, and I take an interest in my plants as individual living things, as well as bits of beautiful colour and form. I like to see a plant grow and develop, to study its distinctive features and their causes, and to read about it and so learn what others have observed. A small, convenient and healthy house, a large and well-situated garden, a good library gradually accumulated, a small competency—and what more in the way of physical possessions can the contemplative man require?

The Englishman’s love of gardens and of gardening is one of the most characteristic things about him. Beautiful flowers provoke enthusiasm in the one-room tenements of Stepney and in the Mayfair drawing-room alike. It is, indeed, pathetic to witness the persistence of this beautiful trait—the love of gardens—in the most unpromising slums of our cities. Worlidge, writing in 1680, says that “there is scarcely a cottage in most of the southern parts of England but hath its proportionable garden; so great delight do most men take in it.” And that it still flourishes, at any rate in the southern half of England, is shown by the following short passage, taken from a London daily newspaper published in early February, 1943:

“While the official date of its arrival is still forty-five days distant, Spring has indeed been in the air since November. People in this office with gardens have some quite impressive evidence of it. M.R., military reporter, has polyantheses, primulas, gilly-flowers—even roses—in bloom. G.H., features editor, says that there are two crocuses in her garden. F.L., sub-editor, was gathering primroses in his Dorset garden a month ago. There are snowdrops and crocuses there now as well. W.H. says aconites in his garden began to bloom earlier than usual, while daffodils have a six-inch growth of leaf.”

It is impossible for the most *blasé* townsman to walk through one of those beautiful villages distributed throughout the south-west of England



THE PRIORY GARDEN, THE PRIORY, WOLLASTON  
Wash drawing by Michael Rothenstein, 1940

without being moved by the little gardens that front the cottages on either side of the road. What is it that is so moving? We are not moved in this way by the flower-beds round the Albert Memorial. Yet there can be no doubt that the latter represent an altogether more definite conscious artistic purpose. Does not one of the great differences lie in this: that in the cottage garden the individuality and character and peculiar beauty of each plant is respected; whereas in the more formal and "artistic" garden the colours and forms of the individual plants are considered as almost nothing in themselves, but only as contributing to some striking mass effect. The typical amateur gardener in this country grows to love his plants almost in the same way as that in which a man is said to love his dog.

One of the greatest gifts of a perfect garden is the gift of solitude, and that is generally beyond the power of the little cottage plot to offer; but, as a source of infinite pleasure to its owner, as a source of pleasure to all who pass by, as a cheering feature of English landscape, and as a great force tending towards contentment and peace, the cottage garden is beyond all praise.



To return to my career as a garden writer. So pleased was John Lane with the reception given to the *Chronicle of a Cornish Garden*, that he asked me to edit a series of Handbooks of Practical Gardening. At the end of the *Chronicle*, I had given a few supplemental hints for those who shared my ideas; among them a selection of tall and dwarf border plants—including, of course, herbaceous plants—hints on constructing a small rock garden, a list of winter-blooming plants, and a list of works on gardening that I had found interesting, suggestive and helpful. This list included first of all Robinson's *English Flower Garden*, his *Hardy Flowers*, and *Wild Garden*, Ellacombe's *In a Gloucestershire Garden*, Bright's *Year in a Lancashire Garden*, Watson's *Flowers and Gardens*, Jekyll's *Wood and Garden*, and Amherst's *History of Gardening in England*. I should have added Parkinson's *Paradisus* and Kerner and Oliver's *Natural History of Plants*.

These books made up, and still do, my gardening Bible. Evidently I took Robinson's ideas as having settled the ancient controversy between the formalist school and their equally dogmatic opponents. Both Robinson and Miss Jekyll seemed to me, and still seem to me, to have intelligently settled the matter of garden construction for all real garden lovers and real plant lovers.

I wrote an early volume of the Handbooks myself. It was called *The Book of Old-Fashioned Flowers*, and was so relatively popular that a second edition had to be brought out a couple of years later. In that book, I give as my aim the teaching to those who are comparatively new to gardening the general principles which they must observe if they wish to grow successfully those flowering plants which are able to live their whole lives in the open air of this country. By old-fashioned flowers are meant those which we may class with the herbaceous, bulbous and other hardy plants which one always expects to find in the old cottage gardens, vicarage gardens and old farmhouse gardens of romance, and does occasionally find in those of reality.

One is continually discovering fresh old-fashioned people, and in like manner we are continually having additions made to our list of old-fashioned flowers. Many newly discovered or newly introduced plants therefore, were treated of in this book. Still, as a matter of fact, most of the flowers named in its pages are old favourites, and have long been grown and sentimentalised over by English gardeners and poets. No attempt was made to render the book a complete handbook of hardy flowers; in the first place, the space at disposal would barely have served to enumerate them, and, in the second place, the thing had been done, and done admirably, by that great gardening writer, William Robinson, whose *English Flower Garden*, already referred to, is in many ways the most important work on gardening which has appeared since the time of Parkinson.

The flowers dealt with in my *Old-fashioned Flowers* are but a few of those worth growing, for nearly every plant, when allowed to develop freely and naturally, is full of interest and full of beauty. Everyone should decide for himself what he will grow in the particular environment he may have to offer. I have no faith in "laws" as to the arrangement of flowers with a view to producing "colour schemes," for I have never seen colour schemes which surpass those chance effects of the hedgerow or the meadow, or of those pleasant gardens where the gardener's sole aim is to grow plants from the plants' point of view—that is to say, with the sole aim of growing them healthily and well. Of course, occasionally, a bad colour shows itself, but the remedy is simple and obvious. Occasionally, too, a colour discord will be perceived in bed or border, but a spade will cure the trouble in five minutes. Indeed, there is some small risk at the present moment that the individuality of beautiful plants and flowers may be too frequently sacrificed to the production of "effects."

It will be generally agreed that an ideal garden should be so enclosed (*hortus*, an enclosed space) as to afford not only shelter to plants from the more strenuous forces of Nature, but also that privacy from the vulgar gaze which we call seclusion. If the garden is to be enclosed by walls, let these be of a fair height—not less than seven feet—and let them be clothed with a variety of the lovely climbing plants now at the disposal of the gardener. Although the evening is the best time for enjoying the flowers of our gardens during the months of July and August, few gardeners ever think of devoting any part of their gardens to flowers that bloom at night. Yet the pleasure to be obtained from them is very great, and the possible variety is considerable. Nearly all are fragrant, as otherwise it would be difficult in the darkness for them to attract the moths which they mostly require as pollen-bearers. The night gardener has a considerable field in which to work; whilst to those who share Baudelaire's love of scents, the realm of night-blooming flowers should be a very Paradise.

"Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
—Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,  
Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens."

I have said that the beauty of a successful garden is due largely to the feeling of repose and settled-downness which it yields. Every plant should look, I feel, as though it "belongs" where it is, as though it always has been there, and as though there is no intention of shifting it in a week or two to some glass-house, store-room, or other site. The plants in many gardens look as though they have merely come to pay an afternoon call,



GARDEN AT CAMBRIDGE COTTAGE, KEW  
Drawing by H. Walter

dressed exactly *à la mode*, speaking always “cumeelfo”—like the people of Troy Town, and elsewhere—giving one the certain knowledge that they will only say the right thing, look the right thing, and leave at the right time, unregretted and unmissed. The “comfortably-at-home” effect may be contributed to, largely, by three factors ; firstly the presence of abundant deciduous trees and shrubs, giving infinitely varied effects of light and shade ; secondly, the arrangement of the plants in bold groups of single species ; and, thirdly, the provision of each separate plant with depth of suitable soil and space to develop its individual form.

There is one book, difficult now to obtain, which contains a record of the truest and most careful study of flowers and of their beauty, which we have in the language. That book is called *Flowers and Gardens* by Dr. Forbes Watson, and the following passage from its pages beautifully explains the sentiment of the gardener who grows mainly old-fashioned flowers, or, at any rate, flowers with which he has long been familiar :

“We make the acquaintance of any individual existence under an immense number of aspects, and it is the sum of all these aspects which constitutes that existence to us. A Snowdrop, for instance, is not to me merely such a figure as a painter might give me by copying the flower when placed so that its loveliness shall be best apparent, but a curious mental combination or selection from the figures which the flower may present when placed in every possible position and in every aspect which it has worn from birth to grave, and coloured by all the associations which

have chanced to cling around it. To the bodily eye which beholds it for the first time, it might be of no consequence what lay within the petals, though even then the imagination might be whispering some solution of the secret ; but to the eye of mind, when the flower has been often seen, that hidden green and yellow which is necessary to complete the harmony becomes distinctly visible—visible, that is, in that strange, indefinite way in which all things, however incompatible, seem present and blended together when the imaginative faculty is at work . . . We find the same principle at work in the feeling which compelled the old sculptors to finish the hidden side of the statue. They said, 'For the Gods are everywhere.' So it is with a really beautiful plant, and for this reason they who would obtain all the possible pleasure and beauty from their gardens should become, not gardeners only, but also botanists and students of poetry and of beautiful form."



... AQUATIC PLANTS  
Coloured engraving from  
*McIntosh's Flower Garden*, 1838

## THE ENGLISH GARDEN

WE have practically no records of life in Britain before its invasion by the Romans in B.C. 55 ; and, even then, we have only the not too reliable record of Julius Caesar. It is pretty certain, however, that nothing that could be called gardening was attempted, even if an occasional eccentric planted round his dwelling some wild strawberry plant or other wild edible fruit or vegetable he came across in his huntings. But the Roman occupation, which lasted some four or five hundred years, certainly brought and left behind it knowledge of gardens and their utilitarian, if not their aesthetic possibilities ; for in Rome itself, we know that gardens and the art of gardening had attained a fairly high degree of development ; and this not only among the richer classes but also among no inappreciable part of the better-to-do plebians. In his *Natural History*, written in the first century A.D. Pliny the Elder tells us (in the words of his translator) that "And even in these our daies, under the name of Gardens and Hortyards, there goe many daintie places of pleasure within the very citie ; and under the colour also and title of them men are possessed of faire closes and pleasant fields, yea, and of proper houses with a good circuit of ground lying to them, like pretie fermes and graunges in the countrey ; all of which they tearme by the name of Gardens.

"And as for the other quarters set out with beds of floures and sweet smelling hearbs, what reckoning was made of them in old time may appeare by this, that a man could not heretofore come by a commoner's house within the citie, but he could see the windowes beautified with green quishins [cushions] wrought and tapissed with floures of all colours ; resembling daily to their view the Gardens indeed which were in our villages, as being in the very heart of the citie, they might think themselves in the countrey. . ."

Considering the long period of the Roman occupation of Britain, and the elaboration of some of the architectural and other features of many of the Roman houses which archaeological research has revealed in this country, we can be pretty sure that gardens and gardening, though perhaps on a more modest scale than in Rome itself, were cultivated by the richer Latin settlers and officials during their stay here. The survival of the Latin names of so many fruits, herbs, and flowers confirms this supposition. Whether or no this was so, it is quite certain that gardening had no place here after the Roman Empire fell and Britain was again subjected to repeated invasions by various continental barbarians. The Saxons were little more civilized than the other non-Latin Europeans who preceded them ; and gardening had again to wait for another civilizing influence to operate here. That influence was furnished by the spread of Christianity and the establishment of monasteries ; among the monks being many



MARCH : PRUNING TREES

Illumination from *Queen Mary Psalter*, English MS. c. 1325

men of learning, who appreciated the pleasure and utility, spiritual as well as material, of such unwarlike arts and crafts as those of horticulture and the writing and reading of books. On the products of their gardens the monks depended for the materials of a large part of their routine dietaries, whilst their medical remedies mainly consisted of herbs which they themselves grew. Others, they no doubt imported in a dry state from Continental monasteries, furnished with more congenial climates. In the twelfth century, it is recorded that Brithnodus, the first Abbot of Ely, improved the Abbey by constructing gardens and orchards around it: in these arts, he is reputed to have been highly skilled. And, in the same century, an orchard, vineyard and herbarium form part of the surroundings of the monastery at Canterbury. Of this we have pictorial evidence in the Great Psalter of Eadwin, now in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Alexander Necham, who was born in 1157 and was made Director of the school attached to Dunstable Abbey whilst still in his twenties, in his *De Naturis Rerum*, gives an account of what he says a fine garden should consist and what plants it should contain. It is generally thought that this is mainly a list of plants which he grew in his garden at Cirencester (where, having joined the Augustines, he became Abbot in 1213).

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we find the times so troublous that small attempt at gardening—even the planting of vineyards—was made, apart from the monasteries. A few important houses were

surrounded by pleasure grounds, with trimmed hedges and constructed labyrinths. In such a labyrinth at Woodstock was concealed the bower of "Fair Rosamund" ; and these grounds were more elaborately cultivated by Henry III. By this time, however, gardens had become much more general around the big houses, and fruits of many kinds were grown, including pears, apples, quinces, mulberries, medlars, cherries and peaches. King John is reported as having made himself seriously ill in an attempt to bury his chagrin in a surfeit of peaches and ale. By the middle of the fourteenth century, gardens were so common and so prolific that the gardeners employed by the Lords and citizens of London had set up a kind of market to sell their "pulse, cherries, vegetables and other wares to their trade pertaining" on a piece of ground "opposite to the church of St. Austin near the gate of St. Paul's Churchyard." This market, however, prospered and expanded to such an extent that it interfered with "persons passing both on foot and on horseback," and "the scurrility, clamour and nuisance of the gardeners and their servants" had become such an annoyance to the respectable neighbours and "such a nuisance to the priests who are singing matins and mass in the church of St. Austin, and to others, both clerks and laymen, in prayers and orisons there serving God," that a petition was addressed to the mayor and aldermen that the market might be removed to some more fitting place.

Some interesting details of one of these large London gardens are given in a roll preserved at the Record Office, giving an account of the possessions of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, at the very end of the thirteenth century.

Whilst the gardens attached to great houses and castles were used as places of meeting and recreation, the garden of the ordinary farm or cottage was, in the fifteenth and earlier centuries, entirely utilitarian in aim—that is, it was a herb and vegetable garden. It was, indeed, regarded as an adjunct of the kitchen and the still-room ; and therefore was commonly part of the woman's province. Barnaby Googe, writing a hundred years later, said : "Herein were the olde husbandes very careful and used always to judge that where they found the Garden out of order, the wife of the house (for unto her belonged the charge thereof) was no good huswyfe."

The orchards and gardens of the monasteries and priories were also mainly occupied with fruit, vegetables, and savoury and medicinal herbs. William of Malmesbury, writing in the twelfth century, commented on the famous vineyards of Gloucestershire which, he said, "are more plentiful in crops and more pleasant in flavour than any in England." The survival in many towns of a "Vine Street" probably indicates both the existence and the site of twelfth and thirteenth century vineyards. The accounts of the Priory of Norwich, a number of which exist in manuscript, give details of the activities of the Monastery gardeners. The monastery



'LOVER ATTAINS THE ROSE'

Illumination from *Roman de la Rose*, Flemish MS. c. 1500

orchard contained mixed fruit trees, the apples and pears being used not only for eating but for the making of cider and perry, large quantities of these being made each year. In bad fruit years, the purchase of apples and pears for the table is shown on the accounts ; but usually there seems to have been an ample supply. This is likely enough, as many monasteries had orchards of considerable extent, that at Llanthony Priory being twelve acres in size. As early as 1175, a Papal Bull of Alexander III confiscated the property of the monks of Winchenley in Gloucestershire, this property including the town of Swiring, "with all its orchards."

By the end of the fourteenth century, the poorer parts of the community had established themselves in a better and more independent position as against the autocracy of the lords of the soil. Instead of rendering service to the landlord for so many days a week, they purchased complete exemption by payment of rent, either in money or in kind, for their little farms and holdings. Practically every cottage and farm thus



liberated had an orchard and garden round it. The very poor, indeed, lived almost entirely on vegetables. Langland, in *Piers Plowman*, says :

“Al the povere peple tho  
Pescoddes fetten,  
Benes and baken apples  
Thei broghte in hir lappes,  
Chibolles and chervelles,  
And ripe chiries manye,”

and later, he says, the poorest folk,

“With grene poret and pesen,  
To poisons hym [*Hunger*] thei thohte.”

Chaucer, too, in picturing the dire poverty of patient Griseldis, speaks of her dependence on vegetables, and of the fact that as she had no garden, she gathered the wayside herbs for her food :

“Whan she homward cam she wolde bringe  
Wortes or othere herbes tyme ofte  
The which she shredde and seeth for her livinge.”

Among the better-to-do, although vegetables still occupied a substantial space in the garden, more attention was paid to fruits and, later, to a considerable variety of flowers. Fruit was plentiful and cherries and strawberries were hawked in the town streets. Lydgate writes in *London Lackpenny*, of the cry of the street sellers :

“Then unto London I dyd me hye,  
Of all the land it beareth the pryse  
‘Hot pescodes’ one began to crye,  
‘Strabery rype’ and ‘cherryes in the ryse’.”

In these larger gardens of the richer classes fruit was cultivated not only for its edible value but also for its beauty of flower and growth. Indeed, in an increasing number of these gardens restfulness, seclusion, and aesthetic qualities became the prime considerations. Paths were gravelled or sanded ; turf mounds, on which to sit and stand to look over the garden walls, were built up, and climbing and twining plants were so trained, often on trellises, as to produce arbours. The whole garden was surrounded by walls or thick hedges. Flowers were grown for their beauty and their scent, though the number of varieties was not great. We get good pictures of these late fourteenth century gardens from Chaucer's poems ; the arbour in *The Flower and the Leaf* :

“benched was, and eke with turfes newe,  
Freshly turved . . .  
And shapen was this herber, roofe and all,  
As is a pretty parlour ; and also  
The hegge as thicke as is a castle wall,  
So that who list withoute to stand or go,

Though he would all day prien to and fro,  
He shoulde not see if there were any wighte  
Within or no; but one within well mighte  
Perceive alle that yeden there withoute."

The walled garden of Mirth, in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, gives a fair description of the garden of Chaucer's day, with its carpet of fresh flowers :

"There sprange the vyolet al newe,  
And fresshe pervynke ryche of hewe,  
And floures yelow, white and rede;  
Such plenty grewe there never in mede.  
Ful gaye was al the grounde, and queynt,  
And poudred, as men had it peynt,  
With many a freshe and sondrye floure,  
That casten up ful good savoure."

Roses were grown both for beauty and fragrance ; single and double, as well as the dog-rose and sweet-briar. The rose-bush in Mirth's garden drew the poet with its sweet scent.

During the middle years of the fifteenth century, interest in gardening on a luxurious scale reached a low ebb, owing to the new insecurity caused by the Wars of the Roses. The big houses took on the character of fortified castles, and, so far as might be, were built on the tops of hills. But, with the ending of these wars by the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, and the accession of Henry VII to the throne, things became settled once more, and new houses of a different and more homely type were built in the valleys and on the lower slopes, where serious gardening was more possible. During the early years of the Tudor period, several novelties were introduced into these gardens, two of the most striking being the surrounding of flower-beds with low trellis-work, and the clipping of certain suitable trees and shrubs into quaint shapes—the art of topiary. Leland, writing in the early years of the sixteenth century, mentions two or three gardens in which examples of this art were to be found. At "Wresehill Castle" he describes an orchard with artificial mounts "opere topiario writhen about in degrees like turnings of cokilsheells to come to the top without payne," and refers to another garden, celebrated for its topiary, at Uskelle village, near Tewton. Reference has previously been made to the construction of mounts built against the walls of enclosed gardens, from the top of which views might be obtained of the surrounding country, and the approach of enemies might be observed. In Tudor times, these mounds or mounts became much more highly developed, becoming practically small artificial hills, built of earth, and planted with fruit trees, the winding paths leading up them bordered with flowers and herbs. At the top of many of these mounts was an arbour of varying degrees of permanence, some differing little from those of the previous century, some quite substantial little buildings of brick or stone. One of the most elaborate of

these arbour-topped mounts was constructed in 1533 at the end of "The King's New Garden" at Hampton Court. The arbour, in this instance, was a very elaborate structure, largely of glass; and payment was made for the lattice-work to "John, a gwylder smith," and to Galyon Hone, the King's glazier for a number of items. Sometimes the more elaborate of these arbours were connected with others or with the house by galleries of poles and trellis, covered with vines and creepers, these galleries running along beside the garden walls.

Another innovation of the very earliest fifteenth century, distinct from the straight trellis-edged beds, were the "knotted" flower-beds, planned out to form interlacing geometrical patterns. Of the Hampton Court garden it was commented that it was so "enknotted it cannot be expressed." The ribbon-like strips of which these beds were composed were bordered with close clipped box plants or thrift or similar low-growing tufted plants, or else by narrow edgings of brick or tile, flowers and small shrubs being planted between them, rather in the manner of Victorian carpet-bedding. Sometimes, instead of flowers, the strips were picked out with various coloured earths. Hampton Court gardens were also embellished with numerous brass sun-dials, and with carved animals holding vanes.

In the *Literary Magazine* in 1757, appeared, with copious extracts, a long review, of Paul Hentzner's *Journey into England in the Year 1598*—that is, during the reign of Elizabeth—which was privately published at Strawberry Hill, only a few copies being printed for distribution among friends. Of the gardens at Nonsuch, another palace of Henry VIII, Hentzner gives us a clear picture. "Nonsuch, a royal retreat, in a place formerly called Cuddington, a very healthful situation, chosen by King Henry VIII for his pleasure and retirement, and built by him with an excess of magnificence and elegance, even to ostentation; one would imagine everything that architecture can perform, to have been employed in this one work: there are everywhere so many statues, that seem to breathe, so many miracles of consummate art, so many charts that rival even the perfecting of Roman antiquity, that it may well claim and justify its name of Nonsuch, being without an equal, as the poet sung:

This which no equal has in art or fame,  
Britons deservedly to Nonsuch name."

But gardens of this artificial and over-architectural kind were confined to the pleasure-grounds of a section of the nobility and the very rich. William Harrison, in his contribution to the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, in 1586-7, describes his own garden, and comments—possibly with some irony—on these knotted and statuary-loaded pleasaunces. "How art," he writes, "also helpeth nature, in the dailie colouring, dubling and inlarging the proportion of our floures, it is incredible to report, for so curious and so cunning are our Gardeners now, in these daies, that they



# TITLE PAGE

From *Paradisi In Sole Paradisus Terrestris* by John Parkinson, 1629

presume to doo in maner what they list with nature, and moderate hir course in things as if they were hir superiours. It is a world also to see how many strange hearbs, plants and annuall fruits, are dailie brought unto us from the Indies, Americans, Taprobane, Canarie Iles, and all parts of the world. . ."

A reaction from the extreme artificialities which had found their way into and, as most people nowadays would think, corrupted the reasonable formalism of the truly English garden, set in during the reign of Elizabeth. Significantly, this purge is evidenced in what is perhaps the finest essay on gardening ever written by an Englishman. In his celebrated *Essay on Gardens*, Bacon indicates the type of garden that appealed to a man of culture and taste in Elizabethan days. He has in mind the spacious garden of a man of wealth and position, for he describes the deliberate planning

of a "princelike" garden covering not less than thirty acres of ground. This he would have "divided into three Parts : a Greene in the Entrance ; a Heath or Desart in the Going forth ; and the Maine Garden in the midst ; besides Alleys on both Sides. And I like well that Foure acres of Ground be assigned to the Green ; six to the Heath ; Foure and Foure to either Side ; and Twelve to the Maine Garden. The Greene hath two pleasures ; the one, because nothing is more Pleasant to the Eye than Greene Grasse kept finely shorne ; the other, because it will give you a faire Alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a Stately Hedge, which is to inclose the Garden. But, because the Alley will be long, and in great Heat of the Yeare, or Day, you ought not to buy the shade in the Garden by going in the Sunne thorow the Greene, therefore you are, of either Side the Greene, to Plant a Covert Alley, upon Carpenter's Worke, about Twelve Foot in Height, by which you may goe in



TULIP  
Woodcut from Gerard's *Herball*



ROSES

Coloured engraving by Earlom after R. J. Thornton  
From Thornton's *Temple of Flora or Garden of Nature*, 1799



*By courtesy of the Artist*

THE BACKYARD, LANSCOMBE FARM, COCKINGTON, DEVONSHIRE  
Oil painting by Dorothy Belasco



VIEW FROM THE GARDEN AT LADYWOOD, GRASMERE, WESTMORLAND

Oil painting by Gilbert Spencer, 1942

*By courtesy of the Artist and the Leicester Galleries, London*

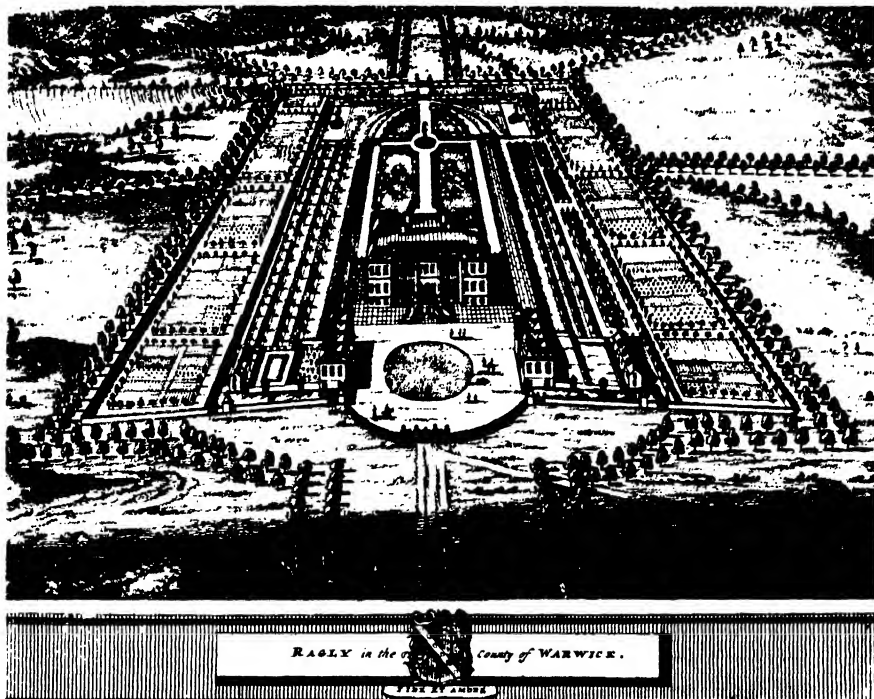




*By courtesy of the Artist and the Leicester Galleries, London*

THE GREENHOUSE

Oil painting by Stanley Spencer, 1938



A FORMAL GARDEN  
Seventeenth century engraving

Shade into the Garden. As for the Making of Knots or Figures, with Divers Coloured Earths, that they may lie under the Windowes of the House on that Side which the Garden stands, they be but Toyes: You may see as good Sightes many times, in Tarts. The Garden is best to be Square, encompassed, on all the Foure Sides, with a stately Arched Hedge."

After giving a long list of flowers and shrubs "for the Climate of London," arranged to give beauty in the garden throughout the year—"that you may have *Ver Perpetuum*, as the Place Affords," Bacon goes on to enumerate those flowers and herbs which should be grown for their scent in the garden. "And because," he says, "the Breath of Flowers is farre Sweeter in the Aire (where it comes and Goes, like the warbling of Musick) than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that Delight than to know what be the Flowers and Plants that doe best perfume the Aire. Roses Damask and Red are fast Flowers of their Smels; so that you may walke by a whole Row of them, and finde Nothing of their Sweetnesse; Yea, though it be in a Morning's Dew. Bayes likewise yeeld no Smell as they grow. Rosemary little, nor Sweet-Marjoram.

That which above all Others, yeelds the Sweetest Smell in the Aire, is the Violet ; specially the White-double-Violet, which comes twice a Yeare ; about the middle of Aprill, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the Muske-Rose. Then the Strawberry-Leaves dying, which yeeld a most Excellent Cordiall Smell. Then the Flower of the Vines : It is a little dust, like the dust of a Bent, which growes upon the Cluster in the first Comming forth. Then Sweet Briar. Then Wall-Flowers, which are very Delightfull to be set under a Parler or Lower Chamber Window. Then Pincks, and Gilly-Flowers, specially the Matted Pinck, and Clove Gilly-Flower. Then the Flowers of the Lime Tree. Then the Hony-Suckles, so they be somewhat afarre off. Of Beane Flowers I speake not, because they are Field Flowers. But those which Perfume the Aire most delightfully, not passed by as are the rest, but being Troden upon and Crushed, are Three : that is Burnet, Wilde-Thyme, and Water-Mints. Therefore you are to set whole Allies of them, to have the Pleasure, when you walke or tread." Even Bacon advised that the "Stately Arched Hedge," which encompassed the garden might well be surmounted, between the arches, by "little Figures, with Broad Plates of Round Coloured Glasse, gilt, for the Sunne to play upon." Yet it is on the beauty and fragrance of the plants and flowers that he chiefly dwells.

Arbours were still a common feature of Elizabethan gardens ; as were the mounts of earlier days. Some of these were arranged in the middle of the garden, and others were banked up against the outer walls. Of such, Bacon wrote : "At the end of both side grounds, I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast-high, to look abroad into the fields." In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Hero speaks of the arbour in Leonato's garden :

"— the pleached bower  
Where honey-suckles, ripen'd by the sun,  
Forbid the sun to enter."

It was in an arbour in his orchard that Mr. Justice Shallow gossiped with Falstaff, over a last year's pippin and a dish of caraways. Among the plants used for these pleached arbours were honey-suckle, jasmine, vines, roses, clematis or "Ladies' Bower"—"both white and red and purple, single and double."

Mazes, though examples of them had existed in England for a couple of centuries, became more popular as a feature of large gardens in the later years of Elizabeth's reign. William Lawson, in his *New Orchard and Garden*, issued in 1618, speaks of mazes, which, he says, "when they are well formed of a man's height, your friend may perhaps wander in gathering berries till he cannot recover himself without your help." Writing some half-century earlier, Thomas Hill gives two plans for such mazes ; commenting that though they are not "for any necessary commoditie



FLORA

Engraving from R. Blome's *The Gentleman's Recreation*, 1686

in a garden, those who so listeth may place the one of them in a void place that will best be spared for the only purpose to sport in them at times"; and he gives a list of some of the plants used in setting these mazes. The list includes lavender, cotton spike, majoram, isope, time, quickset, privet, and plashed fruit trees.

"The art of Topiary" continued to be practised, though it devoted itself mainly—except in established topiary gardens—to the designing of rounded bushes, pyramids and other geometric forms. But here and there, more elaborate topiary work was carried out.

In later Tudor and early Stuart times, a very large number of new flowers from abroad—what Parkinson classed as "outlandish" flowers as distinct from "English" flowers—were introduced into the larger gardens of this country; especially the gardens of the more cultured among the well-to-do. These flowers were for the most part, grown in beds—which were commonly spoken of as "open knots," in contradistinction to "closed knots" of previous times, which were more concerned with pattern than with interesting plants.

Parkinson names, among English flowers, many that had long been known in our gardens, such as violets, columbines, roses, primroses and marigolds; together with "flowers that being strangers unto us, and giving the beauty and bravery of their colours so early, before many of our own-bred flowers, the more to entice us to their delight." Of daffodils he says there are almost a hundred sorts "whereof many are so exceeding sweete that a very few are sufficient to perfume a whole chamber."

For standards in the hedges and borders he finds "the sort of roses" the fittest; with them the Cherry Bay, the Rose Bay or Oleander, and the white and purple syringa (lilac) are "all graceful and delightful to set at several distances in the borders of knots." *Pyracantha* or "Prickly Coral Tree" makes a fine evergreen hedge, "plashed or laid down." The *Laurustinus* "doth chiefly desire to be sheltered under a wall, where it will best thrive, and give you his beautiful flowers in Winter for your delight, in recompence of his fenced dwelling."

Flowers and scented leaves were much used to decorate and perfume houses, as well for personal ornament. Gerard says that violets made into posies "are delightful to look on and pleasant to smell," and Parkinson says of the auriculas, that "their flowers, being many set together upon a stalke, doe seeme every one of them to bee a Nosegay alone of itselfe," and of wallflowers he writes that "the sweetnesse of the flowers causeth them to be generally used in Nosegayes, and to deck up houses"; for which latter also leaves and branches of box "serve both Summer and Winter." Scented flowers and herbs were also extensively used, together with coarser herbage, for the strawing or strewing of floors; and Parkinson mentions germander as being "much used as a strawing herbe for houses, being pretty and sweete."

Even these few quotations from Parkinson's *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus terrestris* (literally translated, Park-in-sun's Earthly Paradise) will show the least sentimental reader how different a book is this Herbal from any other printed in England. Gerard's Herbal, for instance, the first edition of which was published in 1597, thirty years before the appearance of Parkinson's book, is, so far as enthusiasm and interest in the beauty of flowers and gardens are concerned, a mere dull summary of herbalist's "facts"; and is, in large part, a direct translation of Dodoens' *History of Plants*—a herbal of great reputation on the Continent. Both Gerard and Parkinson were doctors, and both had great experience of the plants and flowers about which they wrote. Both had fine gardens in London, and both—especially Parkinson—were botanists of repute as well as gardeners.

In the course of the seventeenth century gardening ideas and practice—as might be expected with the coincident rapid changes in our political and social structure—experienced many transformations. During the eleven years of the Commonwealth, gardens, taking the colour of the time, became more utilitarian; and existing gardens were largely broken up and made more fruitful and materially profitable. The Royal gardens at Nonsuch and Wimbledon were sold, and steps were taken to dispose even of Hampton Court. But Parliament decided to stay the order, with the result that it was still in public hands at Charles II's restoration.

Few new large gardens were laid out until after 1660. Still, the interlude was not without value, and interest. During those eleven years, appeared the first gardening book of John Evelyn, though the rest of his books were published after the Restoration. In the last forty years of the seventeenth century, appeared also Worlidge's *Systema Agriculturus* and *Systema Horticulturæ*, as well as his excellent treatise on Cider, *Vinetum Britannicum*.

In these few decades were published also Sir William Temple's celebrated work, *Upon the Garden of Epicurus, or of Gardening in the year 1685*, and Ralph Austen's *A Treatise of Fruit Trees*, and his *Observations upon some part of Sir F. Bacon's Naturall History as it concerns fruit trees, fruits, and flowers*.

Evelyn's interesting *Kalendarium Hortense* went quickly through many editions, the first of which appeared in 1664. In this practical work Evelyn names the flowers to be planted and the garden work to be done in each month of the year; dividing these plants according to their comparative tenderness into three classes, those "least patient of cold," those enduring second degree of cold and those "not perishing, but in excessive cold to be last set in or protected under matrasses or slighter coverings."

During this period, newly planned gardens, both actual and ideal, were, compared with such a one as Bacon's "princely garden," of much smaller size. John Rea's *Flora, Ceres, et Pomona*, which was published in 1676, suggested that "for a private gentleman 40 square yards fruit



A VIEW OF THE ROYAL PALACE AT HAMPTON COURT  
Coloured engraving by Parr after Rigaud, 1751

and 20 flower is enough ; a wall all round of brick 9 feet high, and a 5 feet wall to divide the fruit and flower gardens."

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the tulip mania, in an attenuated form, spread from Holland and took possession of English gardeners. Even in the earlier part of the century, the tulip was greatly admired. Some established gardens included many beds devoted entirely to tulips, each bed being occupied by a different variety. But towards the end of the century the tulip beds became, even in modest gardens, the most highly prized feature. Parkinson, in his *Paradisus*, describes and illustrates several varieties, and an enormous number of variations from these.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, bowling greens had become fashionable, and occupied space in most large gardens. Thomas Baskerville, speaking of Warwick Castle, said that within the gate, "is a fair Court, and within that, encompassed with a pale, a dainty bowling-green, set about with laurels, firs, and other curious trees." In the course of his *Journals*, he refers to public bowling greens in many small towns and attached to many of the inns at which he stayed.

It was in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, during the reign of Charles I, that the Earl of Danby founded and endowed at Oxford the first Botanical Garden in England. Put in charge of this garden was a Brunswicker, John Bobart. In 1648, he published a catalogue of the

plants in the garden, listing about sixteen hundred ; a thousand of which were species from overseas.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century appeared an essay in many ways comparable with Bacon's celebrated work. It was written by another man of letters, Sir William Temple, and published under the title : *Upon the Garden of Epicurus ; or of Gardening in the Year 1685*, It dealt with gardening in general, and especially with the famous garden at Moor Park in Hertfordshire, made by the Countess of Bedford, and familiar to Temple in his youth. In it Temple sets out his picture of the perfect garden, premising that : "In every garden Four Things are necessary to be provided for, Flowers, Fruit, Shade and Water, and whoever lays out a Garden without all these, must not pretend it in any Perfection. It ought to lie to the best Parts of the House, or to those of the Master's commonest Use, so as to be but like one of the Rooms out of which you step into another. . ."

At this time, there were still, as there had always been, many gardens, large and small, within London itself. After all, London was then in many ways comparable both in air and spaciousness with a large cathedral



A VIEW OF THE PHYSIC GARDENS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
Engraving by I. Green, 1773

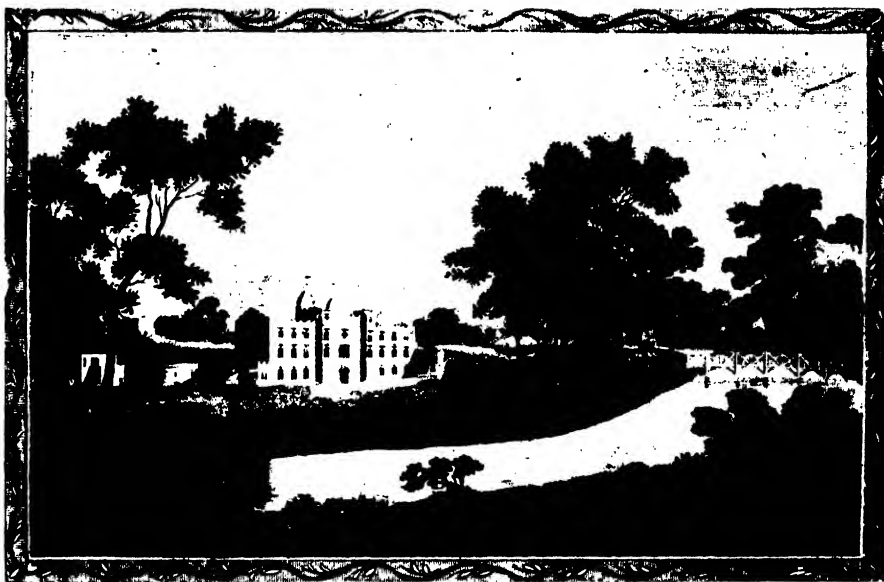


city of to-day ; and the houses of nearly all citizens had attached to them serious gardens, some of considerable size. But even at the beginning of the century, Parkinson had begun to complain of the effect of the smoke of the "sea-coal," then coming into general use. In the very City itself, gardens of no mean proportions had been common. In his *Survey*, John Stow, who died in 1605, (having, by the way, been rewarded, in his 79th year, for a life devoted to public work, by a Licence to Beg, issued by James I) speaks of the house built in 1532 in Throgmorton Street by Thomas Cromwell. "This house being finished," he says, "and having some reasonable plot of ground left for a garden, he caused the pales of the gardens adjoining to the north part thereof on a sudden to be taken down ; twenty-two feet to be measured forth right into the north of every man's ground ; a line there to be drawn, a trench to be cast, a foundation laid, and a high brick wall to be built. My father had a garden there, and a house [summer-house] standing close to his south pale ; this house they loosed from the ground, and bare upon rollers into my father's garden twenty-two feet, ere my father heard thereof. No warning was given him, nor other answer, when he spake to the surveyors of that work, but that their master Sir Thomas commanded them so to do ; no man durst go to argue the matter, but each man lost his land, and my father paid his whole rent, which was 6s. 6d. the year, for that half which was left."

An interesting document which has been preserved is Gibson's *Short Account of Several Gardens Near London ; with Remarks on some Particulars wherein they Excel or are Deficient, Upon a View of them in December 1691*. In this manuscript, Gibson comments on twenty-eight more or less celebrated gardens, including a few market gardens, three of these latter being at Hoxton and one at Mile End. Of Clements, of Mile End, Gibson says that "He has vines in many places about old trees, which they wind about. He made wine this year of his white Muscadine, and white Frontinac, better I thought than any French white wine. He keeps a shop of seeds and plants in pots next the street."

Evelyn's garden at Deptford and Raynton's garden at Enfield are briefly described without enthusiasm ; but, of all the gardens he deals with, evidently that of Dr. Uvedale, also at Enfield, was the one he most admired. He speaks of Uvedale as "a great lover of plants, and, having an extraordinary art in managing them, is become master of the greatest and choicest collection of exotic greens that is perhaps anywhere in this land. But, to speak of the garden in the whole, it does not lie fine to please the eye, his delight and care lying more in the ordering particular plants than in the pleasing view and form of his garden." Dr. Uvedale evidently had the same attitude towards plants and gardens as that of Canon Ellacombe, Forbes Watson, and, indeed, of many of us to-day.

Just before the end of the seventeenth century, several translations of French gardening works were published in England ; John Evelyn and



ESHER IN SURREY, THE SEAT OF THE RT. HON. HENRY PELHAM AS LAID OUT BY MR. KENT, 1798  
Coloured engraving after W. Woollet from *Observations on Modern Gardening*

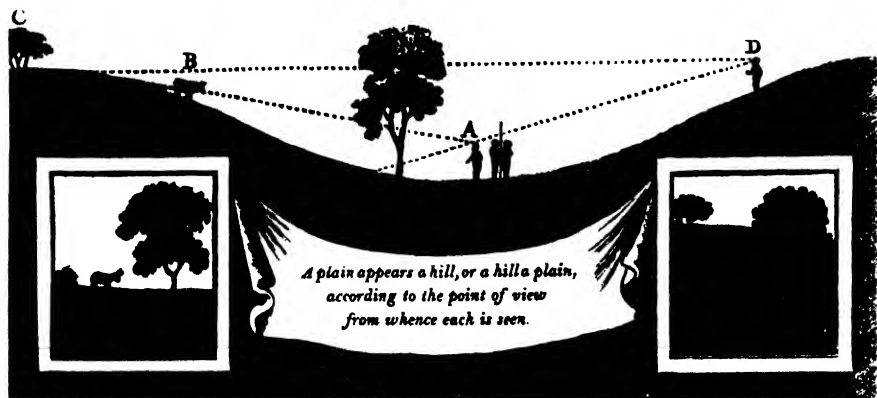
London and Wise (both, at that time, partners in the Brompton Nurseries) being among the most celebrated of the translators. These two gardeners were also fashionable garden designers. The garden of Sir Richard Child, at Wanstead, was designed by London, and described in 1714 by Daniel Defoe, in his *Journey Through England and Scotland*. He speaks of "the noble seat of Sir Richard Child, with the finest garden in the world. You descend from the salon into the parterre, which hath a canal in the middle ; on the right a wilderness, and on the left a fine green walk, which ends in a banqueting house. On one side of this green walk stands the green-house, finely adorned with statues, and uncommonly furnished with greens ; while behind this green-house are variety of high-hedged walks affording delicious vistas. At the bottom of the canal is a bowling-green encircled with grottos and seats, with antique statues between each seat ; this bowling-green is separated by a balustrade of iron from another long green walk, which leads you to another long canal."

In 1670, appeared the first edition of what proved to be a popular work : *The English Gardener*, by Leonard Meager, who, for many years, was a gardener at Warkworth, in Northamptonshire. He favoured quiet, "neatly-ordered" gardens, of a kind which people were beginning to regard as old-fashioned. In 1697, he wrote another book called *The New Art of Gardening ; With the Gardener's Almanack*, spoken of by G. W. Johnson

in his *History of English Gardening*, as one of the classics of gardening ; in a modest way reminiscent of Parkinson and Bacon.

A pupil of London and Wise was Stephen Switzer, whose *The Nobleman's, Gentleman's and Gardener's Recreation* was published in 1715—appearing again with added matter in 1718 under the title *Ichnographia Rustica*, “by which title is meant the general Designing and Distributing of County Seats into gardens, woods, Parks, Paddocks, &c. : which I therefore call forests, or in more easie stile, Rural gardening.”

In this book, Switzer expresses his admiration of and allegiance to Pope ; and, as the extracts quoted show, advocates that “rural” style which gradually took the place of the older *Grand Manier* of Le Notre and his school. The reference to Pope brings us to the beginning of a period of quite understandable reaction from the extreme and in many ways absurd formalism which, at the opening of the eighteenth century, marked an increasing number of gardens of almost every size. The war between formal and so-called Landscape gardening was beginning. The new school was backed by energetic propagandists among accepted men of letters. In 1712, Joseph Addison wrote in the *Spectator* that “our British gardeners, instead of humouring Nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. Our trees rise in Cones, Globes and Pyramids. We see the marks of the scissars upon every Plant and Bush. I do not know whether I am singular in my opinion, but, for my own part, I would rather look upon a tree in all its Luxuriancy and Diffusion of Boughs and Branches, than when it is thus cut and trimmed into a Mathematical Figure ; and cannot but fancy that an Orchard in Flower looks infinitely more delightful than all the little Labyrinths of the most finished Parterre.”



GARDEN PERSPECTIVE

Engraving from Repton's *Observations on the Theory & Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1803



FORCING GARDENS IN WINTER

Aquatint from Repton's *Fragments on the Theory & Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1816

In the following year, Pope, in an article in the *Guardian*, made a semi-humorous attack on the inartistic extravagancies of the fashionable gardens and gardeners of the time.

So early in the century as 1728, Batty Langley, in his *New Principles of Gardening* wrote, "Is there anything more shocking than a stiff, regular garden." When Sir Richard Temple died, at the very end of the seventeenth century, Lord Cobham, Temple's son, began the gardens at Stow. These grew at a tremendous pace, covering, by 1755, a space of five hundred acres. The first designer was Bridgman, subsequently made chief gardener to the King, who laid out the grounds and planned the whole garden. Lord Percival, who visited the gardens in 1724, in a letter to his brother said that "the gardens, by reason of the good contrivance of the walks, seem to be three times as large as they are." Later, he said; "What adds to the bewty of this garden is that it is not bounded by a wall, but by a Ha-ha, which leaves you the sight of a bewtifull woody country, and makes you ignorant how far the high planted walks extend." Horace Walpole, in his essay on *Modern Gardening*, published in 1785, gives an interesting summary of the early history of the new movement. After referring to Temple's description of Moor Park in Hertfordshire, in Lady Bedford's time, mentioned earlier in this book, Walpole goes on to say: "But as no succeeding generation in an opulent and luxurious country

contents itself with the perfection established by its ancestors, more perfect perfection was still sought ; and improvements had gone on, till London and Wise had stocked our gardens with giants, animals, monsters, coats-of-arms and mottoes in yew, box and holly. Absurdities could go no farther, and the tide turned. Bridgman, the next fashionable designer of gardens, was far more chaste ; and whether from good sense, or that the nation had been struck and reformed by the admirable paper in the *Guardian*, No. 173, he banished the verdant sculpture, and did not even revert to the square precision of the foregoing age."

Walpole says of Bridgman : "I have observed in the garden at Gubbins, in Hertfordshire, many detached thoughts, that strongly indicate the dawn of modern taste. . . But the capital stroke, the leading step to all that has followed, was (I believe the first thought was Bridgman's) the destruction of walls for boundaries, and the invention of fosses—an attempt then deemed so astonishing that the common people called them Ha ! Ha ! to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unperceived check to their walks."

Bridgman was followed by Kent, a famous name in the annals of horticulture. Walpole characterises him as "painter enough to taste the charms of landscape, bold and opinionative enough to dare and to dictate, and born with a genius to strike out a great system from the twilight of imperfect essays. He leaped the fence," says our author, "and saw that all nature was a garden." One of Kent's principles was that "Nature abhors a straight line"; therefore all straight walks and straight hedges were anathema to his new school of landscape gardeners.

Perhaps the name with which people are most familiar as a pioneer and exponent of landscape gardening is that of Lancelot Brown. He was born in 1715, and brought up as a kitchen-gardener at Stow. He remained with Lord Cobham until 1750, when he was appointed Royal Gardener at Hampton Court. He became the fashionable garden designer, and was given the job of re-designing nearly all the great gardens in the country ; gaining the nickname of "Capability" Brown, from his habit of saying of nearly every garden he was asked to re-form, that it "had great capabilities." He swept away the ages-old beauties of dozens of the loveliest of English gardens. Brown had an incredible influence on the majority of owners of big gardens, hardly a dozen of which he allowed to retain the features of which their owners had previously been so proud. He refused work in Ireland, because he said that he "had not yet finished England." Tunnard, in his *Gardens in the Modern Landscape*, published in 1938, says that "the demand for Brown's services was enormous, not because he did good work, but because improvements were the fashion. His genial manner won him popularity, and the literary and grammatical allusions with which he invariably illustrated his ideas no doubt helped to produce, in a gullible public, the sense of a competence which he was,

in fact, far from possessing." In time, small villa gardeners did their best to be in the prevailing fashion.

Cowper, in his poem, *The Garden*, gives expression to what later became a general sentiment :

"Improvement too, the idol of the age,  
Is fed with many a victim. Lo, he comes !  
The omnipotent magician, Brown, appears !  
Down falls the venerable pile, the abode  
Of our forefathers . . .  
He speaks—the lake in front becomes a lawn ;  
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise."

Cowper himself evidently had no use for the new theoretical garden designers. He said : "I write in a nook that I call my boudoir ; it is a summerhouse no bigger than a sedan-chair ; the door of it opens into the garden that is now crowded with pinks, roses and honeysuckles, and the window into my neighbour's orchard.

"I sit with all the windows and the door wide open, and am regaled with the scent of every flower, in a garden as full of flowers as I have known how to make it."

Overwhelming as had been the effect of Brown's and Bridgman's propaganda on the owners of stately gardens, and on the fashion-following villa gardeners, the great majority of English gardens and gardeners were far from converted, as the quotation from Cowper illustrates. Many even of those who favoured what they called landscape gardening interpreted the term in a very different way from that of the wholesale iconoclasts. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Sir William Chambers, himself a professed disciple of the "landscape school," said ; "Our virtuosi have scarcely left an acre of shade, or three trees growing in a line, from the Land's End to the Tweed."

"Capability" Brown died in 1784 ; by which time serious doubts as to the wisdom of much of his teaching were increasing amongst his erstwhile admirers. In that or the following year, Humphry Repton, describing himself as a professional landscape gardener, rapidly attracted an extensive clientele. In 1795, he published *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*. Especially at first, he defended much of Brown's theory, but seriously differed from much of it. The outstanding characteristic of Brown's landscapes was their smooth and bald surface : "Why," Repton asked, "this art has been called 'landscape gardening,' perhaps he who gave it the title may explain. I can see no reason, unless it be the efficacy which it has shown in destroying landscapes, in which, indeed, it seems infallible."

"The house," he writes, "the buildings, the gardens, the roads, the bridges, and every circumstance which marks the habitation of man must be artificial ; and although in the works of art we may imitate the forms and

graces of Nature, yet to make them truly natural, always leads to absurdity." Repton goes on to expound his interpretation of the term "landscape gardening." He writes: "To improve the scenery of a country, and to display its native beauties with advantage, is an Art which originated in England, and has therefore been called *English Gardening*; yet as this expression is not sufficiently appropriate, especially since gardening, in its more confined sense of *Horticulture*, has been likewise brought to its greatest perfection in this country, I have adopted the term *Landscape Gardening*, as most proper, because the art can only be advanced and perfected by the united powers of the *landscape painter* and the *practical gardener*." He defines his principles thus:

"The perfection of Landscape Gardening consists in the four following requisites: First, it must display the natural beauties, and hide the natural defects of every situation. Secondly, it should give the appearance of extent and freedom, by carefully disguising or hiding the boundary. Thirdly, it must studiously conceal every interference of art, however expensive, by which the Scenery is improved; making the whole appear the production of Nature only; and fourthly, all objects of mere convenience or comfort, if incapable of being made ornamental, or of becoming parts of the natural scenery, must be removed or concealed."

The beginning of the nineteenth century almost exactly coincided with the beginning of a reaction from the absolutism of the false landscape school of Brown and his colleagues. The quotations from Repton's writings, at the end of the eighteenth century, show the form that this reaction was taking; and, with occasional lapses into conservatism, the trend moved steadily towards the characteristic English garden of the Elizabethan age. In 1839, we find the Rev. Thomas James writing: "Landscape gardening has encroached too much upon gardening proper; and this has had the same effect upon our gardens that horticultural societies have had on our fruits—to make us entertain the vulgar notion that size is virtue. If I am to have a system at all, give me the good old system of terraces and angled walks, and clipped yew hedges, against whose dark and rich verdure the bright old-fashioned flowers glittered in the sun."

Three years later, the same writer, in a couple of articles in the *Quarterly Review* and *The Carthusian* described a plan intended to "combine the chief excellencies of the artificial and natural styles; keeping the decorations immediately about the house formal, and so passing on by gradual transition to the wildest scenes of nature." James showed himself a true descendant of Bacon and other garden-lovers of the Elizabethan age in his appreciation of the peaceful beauty of native English landscape, and of the charm and fragrance of English flowers.

A few years later, in 1850, J. C. Loudon, a popular writer on practical gardening subjects, died; but, in the same year, his widow—herself a keen gardener—published a work of his called *The Villa Gardener*. This



'VIEW FROM THE RUSTIC SEAT, SHRUBLANDS'  
19th century coloured lithograph by E. A. Brooke from *Gardens of England*

was described on the title-page as dealing with "The laying-out, planting and culture of garden and grounds, in extent from one perch to fifty acres and upwards." This book shows the sensible compromise which had, by informed persons with taste and judgment, been arrived at between the two extremist points of view. "Whatever style," Loudon writes, "may be adopted by the architect and landscape gardener both artists must be guided . . . by certain rules, deduced from fundamental principles. Whatever, either in a building or a garden, cannot be justified on fundamental principles, must undoubtedly be wrong ; and whatever cannot be referred to pre-established rules must necessarily be new, and may be either right or wrong, according to its consistency or inconsistency with fundamental principles. . . When any part is produced, either of a building or a garden, for which no sufficient reason can be given, that part must be either a superfluity or a deformity.

"*The fitness of the means employed to the end to be obtained* is the most important principle, applicable both to architecture and gardening as useful arts.

"*In Gardening* the principles of fitness, or the adjustment of the means to the end, may be applied to the situation of the garden ; to the fitness



of the soil for the articles to be cultivated ; to the fitness of the forms of the compartments for carrying on the processes of cultivation ; to the fitness of the culture for the particular plants cultivated, and so on."

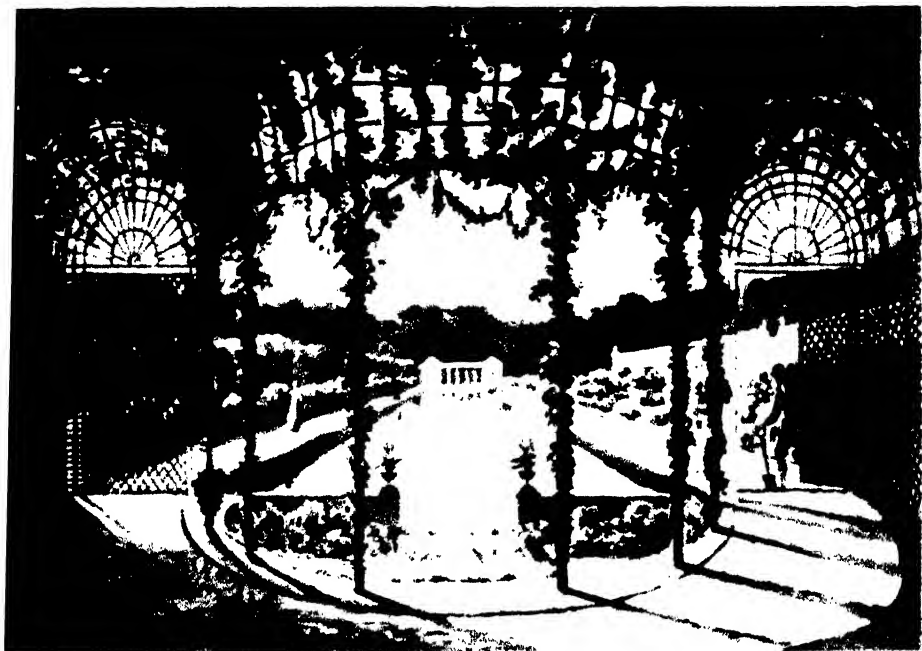
Elsewhere, he says : "The principle of the recognition of art . . . is recognisable in every description of human improvement. . . We have considered it necessary to insist on this principle here, in order that our readers may go along with us when we come to make the application of it to the modern style of landscape gardening. This style is said to be an imitation of nature ; and in consequence, many persons have argued in favour of imitating nature so closely as to produce scenes which might be mistaken for natural ones. . . If we are right in our principle, however, such facsimile imitations of nature, even of the most beautiful nature that can be selected, constitute but a very inferior style of art ; and the landscape gardener who should produce a piece of water surrounded by grass and trees . . . in such a natural-looking manner that it might be selected for copying from by a landscape painter and mistaken by him for a piece of natural scenery, has exactly the same pretension to the character of an artist as a manufacturer of artificial flowers or wax figures."

In the same year, appeared the first edition of another popular handbook, titled *How To Lay Out a Garden*, by Edward Kemp, Landscape Gardener. This book, like Loudon's, shows the interpretation now being given to the term "landscape gardening" by practical men, and accepted by an increasing section of the public. Here are one or two significant extracts.

"Few characteristics of a garden contribute more to render it agreeable than *snuggness* and *seclusion*. They serve to make it appear peculiarly one's own, converting it into a kind of *sanctum*. A place that has neither of these qualities might almost as well be public property. Those who love their garden often want to walk, work, ruminate, read, romp, or examine the various changes and developments of Nature in it ; and to do so unobserved. All that attaches us to a garden and renders it a delightful and cherished object, seems dashed and marred if it has no privacy."

"Art should be pretty obviously expressed in that part of every garden which is in the immediate vicinity of the house, and may sometimes retain its prominence throughout the whole place. In the latter case, terraces, straight lines of walks, avenues of trees or shrubs, rows of flower-beds, and geometrical figures, with all kinds of architectural ornaments, will prevail. Considerable dignity of character may certainly thus be acquired ; and, if well sustained, the expression of high art will be a very noble one. But there are not many places which will bear to be thus treated, and it is less frequently suitable for one of small dimensions."

During the previous century or more, whilst these freakish changes in garden fashion were taking place, there had been a continuously increasing introduction into England of foreign flowering plants, trees and



DESIGN FOR A FLOWER GARDEN

From H. Repton's *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, 1803



*By courtesy of the Artist*

A GARDEN AT HENDON  
Water colour by H. D. Copsey



*By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

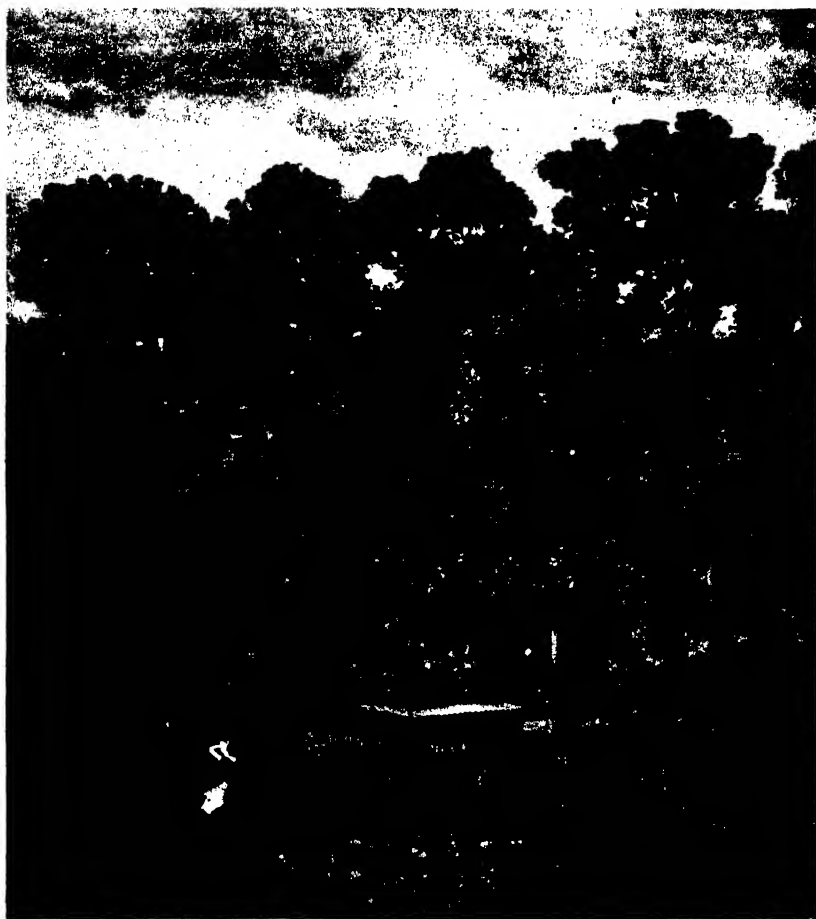
**COLLINGHAM: A YORKSHIRE VILLAGE**

Water colour by W. Carter



*By courtesy of the Artist and the Fine Art Society, Ltd.*

POYNINGS: A SUSSEX VILLAGE  
Water colour by Douglas S. Andrews



THE KITCHEN GARDEN IN OCTOBER  
Oil painting by Harry Bush

shrubs. On the practice of real gardeners, indifferent to the vagaries of fashion, these new flowering plants were having a great effect. Well before the middle of the nineteenth century, the more brilliantly decorative of these importations were in something like general cultivation. Handbooks on the cultivation of these flowers began to appear and met with considerable public demand. Thus, in the second decade of the century,

was published, *A Practical Treatise on the Growth and Culture of the Carnation, Pink, Auricula, Polyanthus, Ranunculus, Tulip, Hyacinth, Rose and other Flowers*, By Thomas Hogg, Florist, Paddington Green, a second edition being called for in 1822. It describes in much detail the various expert methods of cultivation of these so-called "florist's flowers," the number of named varieties of each being fabulous. Thus, over a hundred varieties of carnation are listed. A few years later, in 1836, Thomas Willats brought out *The Florist Cultivator : with select lists of the finest Roses, Geraniums, Carnations, Pinks, Auriculas, Tulips, Dahlias, Heartsease, &c.* In this book, six hundred and sixty-three species of flowers and shrubs are briefly described, with directions for their cultivation.

Many owners of gardens, particularly of gardens of modest size, were concerned only with the cultivation of these relatively new flowers under conditions which best promoted the production of plants with fine showy blooms, regardless of the form and structure of the garden as a whole. They were plant and flower lovers, rather than garden lovers. Before the final quarter of the century was reached, this interest in individual plants and their cultivation had spread widely, not only among the devotees of specimen flowers and florist's varieties but also among those with more catholic tastes, whose main interest was in the healthy growth of individual plants, yet who also recognised as important the part which should be played by the garden's form and structure—at any rate near the house.

The interest taken in individual plants, especially those hardy in this climate, each allowed scope for natural growth, though grouped harmoniously and with an eye to broad effect, allowance being made for some degree of formality near the house, grew steadily as the century moved towards its close. The way was prepared by Forbes-Watson's charming *Flowers and Gardens*, published in 1872, by Henry Bright's *English Flower-garden* and *A Year in a Lancashire Garden*, and several books by keen amateurs like Canon Ellacombe. But the writer who had far and away the greatest influence on the garden-loving public was William Robinson (referred to in the Introduction), the editor and founder of several important gardening journals, and the author of book after book on the practical cultivation and arrangement of hardy plants and shrubs. To him we chiefly owe the herbaceous border and the modern rock garden—a very different thing from the "rockeries" of the big gardens of the Middle Ages. Robinson's point of view broadened a little as time went on, until it differed little from that of William Morris, who wrote, in *Hopes and Fears for Art*, "Large or small, the garden should look both orderly and rich. It should be well fenced from the outer world. It should by no means imitate either the wilfulness or the wildness of Nature, but should look like a thing never seen except near a house." There was, indeed, a tendency on the part of many of the new garden



'HELPING THE WAR EFFORT': LONDON GARDENS IN WARTIME  
Oil painting by Helen Copsey

enthusiasts to oust all formality from their gardens, even though those gardens were five or more acres in area. What had, throughout the generations, been the appropriate—indeed natural and necessary—informality of the English cottage garden, was not necessarily appropriate to these gardens of larger size. Of those of the newer school, who cared for individual plants and their free growth, were some who recognised that the unexaggerated formalism of the Elizabethan gardens was not quite irrelevant. Thus, Henry Bright, writing in 1881, said that "The English Flower garden may afford far greater pleasure than it does at present. We must learn to look on plants, not as mere points of colour, but as old friends on whose coming we can rely, and who, returning with the recurring seasons, bring back with them pleasant memories of past years."

Writing about ten years earlier, Forbes-Watson says: "We find flower-beds habitually considered too much as masses of colour, instead of an assemblage of living beings. . . Gardeners are teaching us to think too little about the plants individually, and to look at them chiefly as an



assemblage of beautiful colours. It is difficult in these blooming masses to separate one from another, all produce so much the same sort of impression. The consequence is that people see the flowers in the beds without caring to know anything about them, or even to ask their names." The chief distinctive mark of the new movement was the appreciation of the beauty of individual plants ; in contrast not only with the purely architectural conception of a garden, but also with the carpet-bedding and "bedding-out" practices which characterised the Victorian age.

Two years after the publication of Bright's little book, William Robinson brought out the first edition of what has become the greatest and most popular contemporary garden classic, *The English Flower Garden*.

The future history of the English garden is doubtful. Everything depends on whether the common man becomes vocal and assertive, or whether with his traditional modesty he leaves everything to be decided by "leaders" who claim to know what is best for him. The findings of the recent Mass-observation enquiry on Housing into the real desires and aspirations of various groups of working people, establish the fact that although a number of the "observed" were unaccustomed to visualise a world in which they had any right of choice, over eighty per cent of the total pictured their ideal home as a small convenient house "with a garden." Should this bit of democracy materialise, the English cottage garden will have come into its own :

"Where the marjoram once, and sage and rue,  
And balm and mint, with curled-leaf parsley grew,  
And double marigolds, and silver thyme,  
And pumpkins 'neath the window used to climb ;  
And where I often, when a child, for hours  
Tried through the pales to get the tempting flowers ;  
As lady's-laces, everlasting peas,  
True-love-lies-bleeding, with the hearts at ease,  
And golden-rods, and tansy running high,  
That o'er the pale-top smiled on passer-by."

# ENGLISH VILLAGES

EDMUND BLUNDEN

## I

IT is possible to fall in love with England's great cities, and I have met people over the Channel who even looked back to their periods of existence in the dingiest parts of London with a fervour, a veneration, a radiant gratitude. Certainly there was more than sentimental recurrence to earlier years and vistas in their attitude. These friends of the Town had discovered not only the wealth of surprises awaiting the enthusiast in almost every part of it, but the extraordinary cheerfulness and frankness which spring up there under any kind of circumstances. It is not for me to run on into one more eulogy of London and Londoners, or to discuss other vast human hives in Great Britain, but let it be admitted that in spite of first impressions our cities have a way of making friends.

It is also possible to develop a considerable dislike for England's country places. I do not mean simply that they, like others elsewhere, can be dull in winter, "droning dull," or that it is not everybody who can be interested very long when the talk is of bullocks. One of our most spirited critics of life, the essayist William Hazlitt—a man moreover who possessed a marvellous sensibility for nature and scenery—has stated the case against our villages in a tremendous piece of accusation. His grievance was concerned with the character of the country dweller. Before going any further, but without going into details, I will concede that there is something in the allegations of such visitors as Hazlitt. I could even add a number of things which he missed, or else which he found it inexpedient to begin meddling with ; but like him I shall stay on the safe side. Two or three modern novelists have said enough on the other. The worst admission that I shall make just at present, in respect of English country communities, are that the pilgrim will often find it horribly difficult to get a reasonable meal there, and that of recent years a dangerous amount of what is called education has been creeping into the fold.

However these things may be, of one thing I am profoundly persuaded, and that is that to the man or woman who is desirous of finding the best in this country I commend the English village. It is, of course, a wide sort of recommendation, for the term covers an astonishing variety of scenes and qualities and experiences ; but my belief is that those who take the hint and set forth almost at random away from our big towns will soon find their rewards, and (what is always peculiarly satisfying) they will acquire treasure for the mind and heart which nobody besides will quite be able to claim. The English village is a very numerous creation, and its individuality will suffice for all of us to make our particular approaches and form our own bonds of sense and thought. Any map-sheet of a few square miles out in the open at once bears witness to the richness of the chances. The very names, as we scan the said plain guide, arise with inducement to come and see the beauty of ancient agricultural conquest, touched with something of feudalism, and something of the monastic ages. I glance at such a map among several which have happened to be gathered on my table, and instantly the slavery of the pen is interrupted by a genius who pretends that I might this very morning be transferred on a magic horse into a region of exquisite freedoms. There murmurs an incantation of names : Dumbleton, Buckland, Stanley Pontlarge ; Winchcomb, Woodmancote,



SAXTON'S MAP OF OXFORDSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND BERKSHIRE, 1574

Charlton Abbots, Sevenhampton, Brockhampton, Temple Guiting, Guiting Power. There come words, already almost pictures, of many a Manor House, Grange and Hall ; of far older Tumulus, Camp, Villa, Ring ; of Abbey, Chapel, Well and Moat, none of them made yesterday ; with promise of Woods and Plantations and Parklands, the Carrant Brook, the River Windrush. . . . It is only a question of opportunity, and these invitations shall be honoured in full.

For immediate beauty of line and colour, one of the world's famous sources is Japan. The Japanese colour-print, which has delighted myriads of us, is not a product of fantasy. It is merely a summary of the real. So, I have felt a little anxious when I had the chance to act as host and companion to Japanese travellers who had resolved to see something

of the territory known to them in the prose of Gilbert White, the poetry of Shakespeare and Meredith, the paintings of Constable and Gainsborough. It seemed to me, while they were looking forth from a hill-side over orchards in bloom, and silvering intervals of rivers, and grey towers and brown roofs, that they did not feel a serious inferiority in the picture to the topographical truths of Hiroshige and Hokusai and Toyonobu. If their accomplished taste in sheer prospects and panoramas and vignettes was not unsatisfied, why should their guide dissimulate a certain satisfaction? Indeed, I felt like the landlady in a French village (a composition of flaring red brick and tinware, if I may say so) who handsomely responded to compliments on a gorgeous *repas*, "Alors si vous êtes contents, moi je suis contente." Yet the word which rings out in my remembrance is not concerned so much with the graciousness and the pictorial vitality of the country scene in England as with a more mundane, perhaps not less noteworthy, characteristic of a village. We were following the path across the hayfields and the old cricket-ground (ploughed up during the war of 1914-1919, and still in service for kail and sheep) when my friend the Tokyo professor, noticing a stately house encircled with a moat and fringed with tufted trees, asked what it was. "The Vicarage—the parson's house." He repeated with a smile of wonder, "The parson's house!" I fancy it was the first time that he, a studious admirer of England for almost half a century, had truly envisaged the solidity and the dignity of each small world which acknowledges itself to be an English village.





THE COTTAGE YARD, 1820  
Oil painting by E. Childe

## II

**M**Y earliest recollections are of such an English village, and I would not very readily agree to exchange them for any other kind. Perhaps it was, and you will pardon me for thinking it was, an exceedingly good example of our villages ; in any case it provided me with a compact commonwealth of the most charming variety and possibility. I could wish that every child had had such a place to grow up in. We were neither of the wealthy nor of the needy sort (there were not many really poor people in the community), so that my memories may be regarded as more or less every one's in that setting ; and again, as

I continue to visit the village, I do not admit that my praise of it arises from the empurpling effects of absence and change. It stands the test of my coolest judgment. At the same time, after many years of wandering here and there among such places, I gladly grant that thousands of others exist through the land which would have been and still will be equally beautiful and chanceful and instructive to young people. My village was, and is, typical of many, or this would not be the place to talk of it. Let me attempt to draw its portrait, as it still appears in main respects.

It lies in a valley forty miles from London. The branch line delivers you at its station (which has now and then been repainted but otherwise stands as it stood eighty years ago), and you have a mile or more to walk. There are hop-gardens and orchards around, as well as a factory which supplies farmers all over the world with chemical preparations, and a paper-mill which used to produce the paper required for wrapping fruit for market. You soon cross the river and go along the short deep canal, cut in the seventeenth century, part of the old system of inland transport which has been declining lately. And here, where it joins the broad river again, is the contemporary inn, "The Anchor," which was originally (we believe) built for the bargemen, and now for years past has been a favourite anchorage for anglers, who have miles of water swift or slow to yield them sport. Should you climb over the footbridge into this beautiful inn, with its nooks and corners answering no particular scheme of architecture, you will hear good talk on local matters and some from the outer world. One word on this question of village inns: they are, many of them, in the nature of little clubs, and the stranger even from a few miles distance may feel for a little while that he is intruding on a private party. But, if he waits, he will be rewarded; the talk will warm up again, and in time he will be accepted as an "honorary member." The country will be revealed in glimpses. At "The Anchor," by the way, you may see some of the best sweet peas in the country, "bloated aristocrats" of their race—while you drink mild or bitter, cider or something shorter. Once, our inns were there chiefly to offer red and white wine, but the national taste has preferred beer, the wine of the country.

Emerging, you will loiter on the long stone bridge which crosses the tumbling-bay, ever resounding to the fall of waters and their splashing hurry among casual mossed rocks and round the bastions. The bridge has its triangular recesses, useful still as heavy transport bangs across,

and meant originally (so we agree) to give foot passengers escape from vast loads of wool on their horse-drawn way towards London. But that was long ago. This bridge, which still answers the wants of all our speeding traffic, is somewhere near or past its sexcentenary. Yet, such is the spirit of our village, a few of us are uneasy about it. Its name is Twyford, and in fact there is a ford across the river here, but people seem to forget. Quite a few years have flown since old Mr. H., careful of the rights of man, used annually to ride his horse through the river, assured that this ritual kept the ford open to the public, no matter about the new bridge.

Here we might stay for days, putting up at "The Anchor" and hiring a boat and tracing out the backwaters and landing in apple-plats and cherry orchards; but Yalding village lies still ahead, at the far end of this prairie with its mosaic of green meadow and swordy rushes, its chopped and twisted willows, its mantled ponds, its pound. Its pound? I hope it is still there. Not that it has much cash value. It is a small fenced enclosure, half lost in huge thistles belonging to the times when this stretch of land was in full use as a common, and smallholders pastured their few cows and horses here. Then, if one of their animals were found straying on the road, he was marched off into the pound, and his owner could get him out on payment of some small money. The last recorded prisoner of this kind is said to have been a harmless donkey, carried off bodily and lifted over the fence into the locked pound by some of our jokers.

And here, among abundance of chestnuts and elms and cedars and acacias, the village streets begin. They are by no means mathematically planned, but that is a general feature of these villages, resulting in rather more of detached beauty than of entire and immediately observable design. Another characteristic is that many of the best houses are concealed, or partly so, beyond high red walls or thick shrubberies of cherry laurel and boxtree, so that it takes time and a good deal of peeping to find out the pleasures of this parish. The chief style of the houses on the street is still eighteenth century, an easy, balanced prose style of glowing but not glaring brick, and high roofs with attic windows, and sometimes an ornamental facing of semicircular tiles. The cottages are apt to be built of wood, in this district—weatherboard, a pleasant, simple material which seems to last for ever. Everywhere it appears that flower-gardens just arrive when people take a house in this village; the smallest space is populous with flowers of fragrance or splendour, but the inhabitants



are quite accustomed to their own careless skill in conjuring these gay miscellanies into the sunshine.

You soon notice that the village is able to look after itself in many ways. The tradesmen's establishments are proof of that. The butcher, the grocer, the cobbler, the barber, the saddler, the ironmonger are here, though the brewery has become a haulage concern. There is the chemist's and the cake-shop, and if you want a dressmaker or a tailor we have them. In spite of the motor-bus, a carrier still makes his journeys to the nearest town and will be found a capital man of business. But, in that respect, should you pass much time in the place, you will be agreeably surprised by the supernatural efficiency of our village stores. They have been of this standard ever since I can remember. Both are housed in ample, substantial eighteenth-century buildings, both are crammed with every sort of article. I have been informed on good authority that Mr. P.'s line in ladies' silk stockings is inimitably fine, but then so is his bacon and his cutlery ; and Mr. C. is the man to go to if you are wanting a curious and beautiful tea-set or a silk eiderdown quilt.

These things are mentioned because it may be supposed an English village is a primitive collection of people and habits, where that country bumpkin Hodge who has been so much and ill used on the stage and in humorous publications drags on his feeble, undernourished and unreflecting life. Without arguing that outlandish corners and hard conditions are not to be found, I can yet say that such a reasonable prosperity as we see in the shops, the buildings, the faces and the occupations round us in this village is familiar throughout the country.

But to continue our walk. The village is built about a river and its creeks, and needs the town bridge with its many arches which was once so narrow as to be used by pack-horses and foot passengers only, and then—at a date long forgotten—was widened for carts. It is a living relic, and so is the butcher's shop which stands on it in the ancient fashion. Its stonework harmonises with that of the church tower just north of it—rising well above the mixed group of shops and dwellings and inns and alleys which seem like its brood, under its protection. The tower is square, with grim window-slits, but it wears at a corner of its flat top a queer cupola resembling a large green onion (an early eighteenth-century fancy), which adds an effect of friendly humour. The church is large, and has details which, to the discerning eye, chronicle the history of several hundred years ; but of course most of the memorials do not



THE MARKET CART

Oil painting by D. Wolstenholme, Senior

go back beyond the Cromwell period, though we trace our vicars back to the Conquest almost. Here you may read specimens of lapidary verse and prose of great elegance, proper to the costly alabaster on which they are so finely chiselled ; and here in gilded lettering the terms of former benefactions to the poor of the parish perhaps survive the actual application of them. There is a singular union of austerity and of intimacy, to my feeling, within this church of many painted arches. It is, to be candid, not one of the celebrated examples even in our own district, but as one walks its aisles and thinks that scarcely a real village in England is without some such fine piece of sacred architecture, then the question whether our great centres of commerce are mainly ugly or not loses its importance.

At the door, you glance at one of the official flysheets tacked to the notice-board, and you remark with some bewilderment that it is a warning, to folks of this world, about the next payment of income tax.

It is a practical demonstration of the old alliance, Church and State, and equally of the everyday contacts between our village and its own church ; there is the centre still of more affairs than are readily catalogued. Perhaps you miss the dreaming form of piety as you scan our house of prayer—but the village has its own devotion to that house, and so far shows no signs of following some more modern symbol. The church tradition, with its ceremony, eloquence, music and morality, is too deep to be soon lost.

You will ask about our schools, perhaps ; and then I must be allowed a sigh of regret. That gabled, rosy building at the top of the street, its windows glittering through the line of chestnut-trees, was till lately the Grammar School, with a very lengthy history, and quite an atmosphere of learning ; farmers' sons from the surrounding country, and aspiring children from the village, used to come here and get some Latin and French and mathematics. The last Great War was its ruin. It was, I suppose, unsatisfactory in every respect as a modern school—and yet, how the memory of its lessons and customs sweetens these days ! The buildings still serve the village ; the boys' club or the nursing associations occupy the gaunt rooms where the "poor usher" once droned away at the world's Famous Rivers or the Elements of Euclid.

The village schools for infants, girls and boys are, like many more in England, the products of early Victorian effort ; their little steeple, their pointed windows, their stonework all have a church look. They are as they were built, almost a hundred years ago, and I could sing the praise of the generations of teachers who have worked modestly in them and whose work may be tested by the friendliness and good conversation of the young people we meet on our walk.

Religions, for us, are few : Church and Chapel. The Baptist Chapel, a neat brick building, dates from the later years of Queen Victoria. The village does not dispute over its forms of worship, and I think we see the vicar and the minister having a cheerful talk this moment on the roadside.

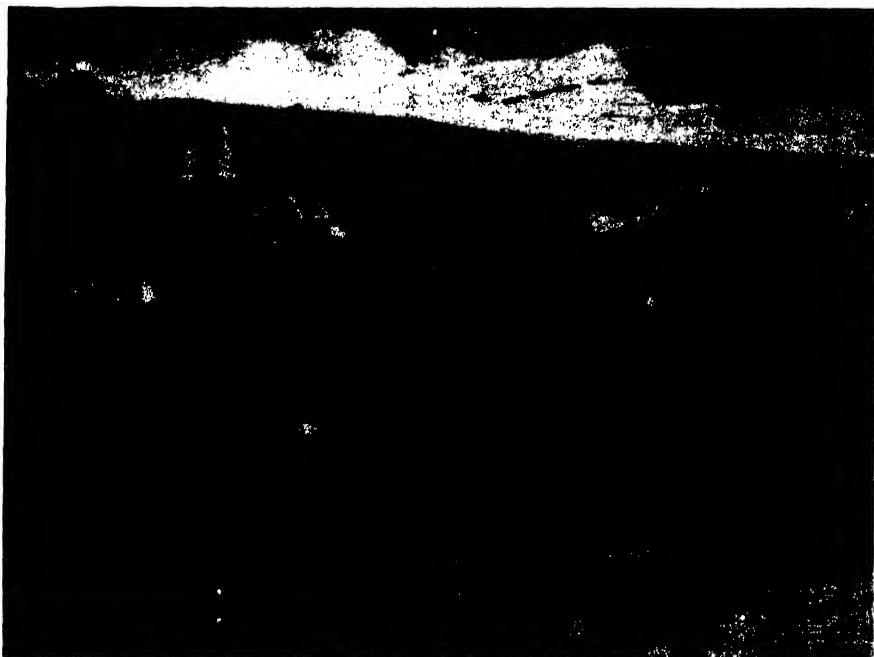
A few great houses in our parish are still regarded with a degree of veneration. Not many years ago, they were truly powerful influences in our community, and even now, when wealth is reduced and the social order modified, they are relied upon for various kinds of leadership. The buildings are maintained, despite the problems of our time, in beautiful order, and their lawns and flower-beds and ornamental trees as yet make a rich picture. Hereabouts the passion for planting rare



THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL, STEYNING, SUSSEX

and exotic trees and shrubs has been general, and you find even a little wilderness of bamboo by the old mill pond. The touch of the East is felt even in the low stone wall below this triangle of pines—the stones are set in an oriental pattern.

If we passed by the cricket and football ground without a thought, we should make a great mistake. Perhaps it is a mere coincidence, but this green level is part of a wide meadow the name of which preserves that of an old sport, the Quintains. Not many miles from here, one may chance on a village green where the apparatus for that mediæval tilting is, or lately was, visible. Our great game is cricket, our summer is incomplete without its encounters and its old and young assemblies of spectators, and however the actual process of play may seem to the uninitiated visitor, the entire scene within this zone of woods and pastures, with the pigeons flying over or the cuckoos calling across, and now and then the church clock measuring out the hour with deep and slow notes, cannot but be notable. Then, if ever, our desire for peace, but our desire for a contest too, comes forth in its most gracious and equable picture. I would paint any one of these boys, in his white clothes, with his ruffled hair, his keen and serious face, walking forth with his



HOP GARDENS OF KENT  
Water colour by C. G. Lawson

bat in hand, as a portrait of whatever is truly fine and serene in our national character.

The village, which has thus been briefly charted, is surrounded and intervalled with the farms on which its life has so long depended. This part of England is what Byron called "a paradise of hops and high production." The apple and cherry orchards perhaps extend more widely than the hop gardens ; and there are fields of loganberries, of strawberries ; soft meadows for grazing ; wide lands whitened with hundreds of ever hungry fowls. In the time when the fruit-trees bloom the whole scene, viewed from the hill where the spring-well gushes forth for ever, is exquisitely gay and young. Then, later in summer, the hop gardens are the show-piece, with their long shady green tunnels or aisles of leaf and berry, and their high hedges curtaining them from the winds. But then again the scene of the apple orchards with our strong labourers in their jerkins busy on their ladders, or stacking their bushel baskets of bright sound fruit, is alike beautiful and purposeful. In many



*By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

AN ENGLISH VILLAGE  
Water colour by John Constable, 1821



*By courtesy of the Artist*

**MORSTON: A NORFOLK VILLAGE**  
Water colour by Martin Hardie



*By courtesy of the University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum*

**IFFLEY FROM THE TOWING PATH, OXFORD**

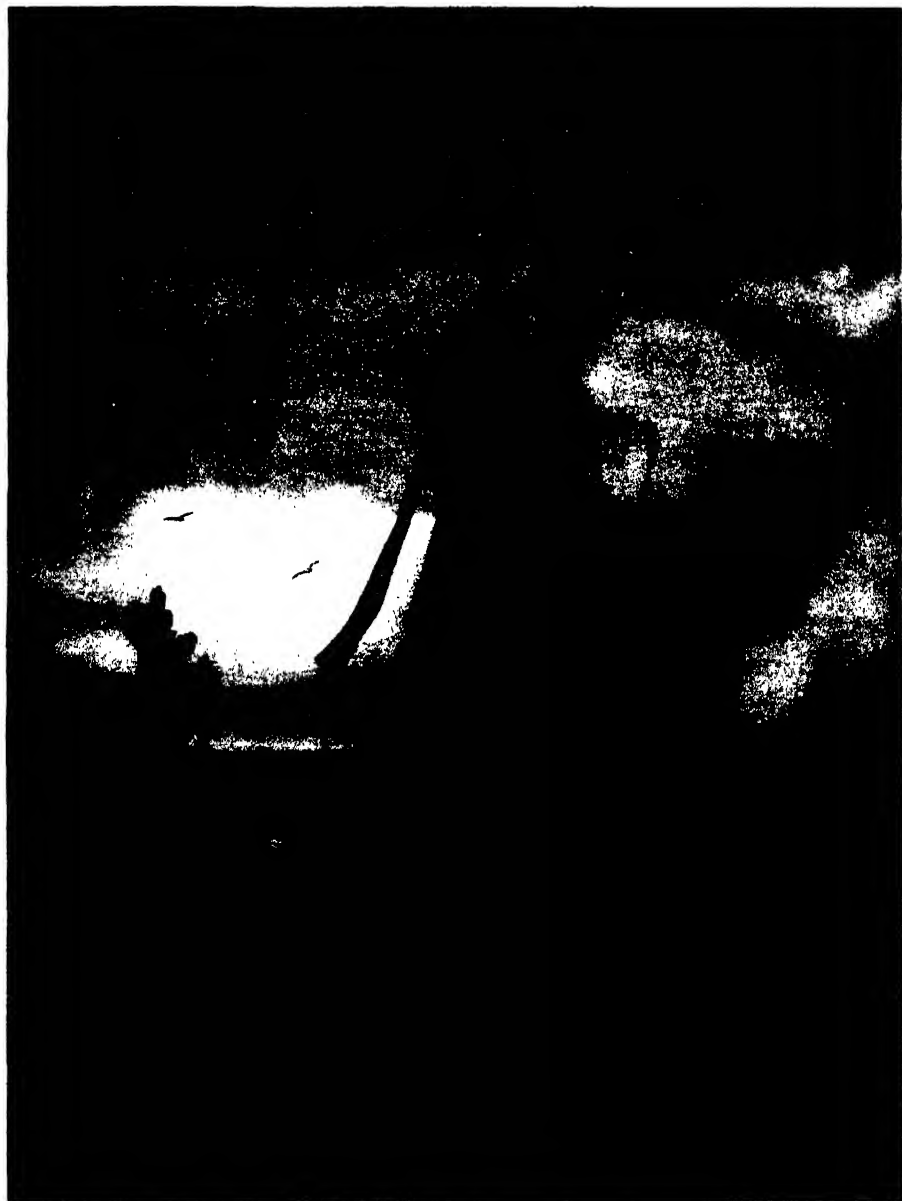
Water colour by Peter de Wint, 1784-1849





*By courtesy of the Artist*

**THE VILLAGE FLOWER AND VEGETABLE SHOW**  
Oil painting by Gilbert Spencer



A WINDMILL IN LINCOLNSHIRE  
Water colour by John Sell Cotman

other aspects, if I may be permitted the reflection, such a village deserves to be well-liking and well off ; for its folk have treated Nature kindly and cleverly, and are still thinking how they may improve on the knowledge and method of yesterday. They possessed these lands long since, but have never fallen into the mistake of thinking that possession means sitting still and hoping for the best.

Up on the hill (whence you can almost always look forth upon a vast tract of valley land perpetually changing its tints, its lights and shades even though the day seem steady) there are ancient hollows and quarryings in the chalk, where bramble bushes dangle and the elder brings its greeny flowers and purple-black clusters of berries. Ancient they are, but not so as to have outdistanced the memory of the village. From these, it is still mentioned, the village church was quarried, and that is quite a long while since. We do not remember everything, it is true ; but no matter how many of our families die out or depart, how many newcomers (we are very near London after all) settle into the street, quite a number of fragments of history continue as parts of our life. The windmill which used to grind our corn has long ceased to be needed, and is gone altogether ; yet I hear the boys say, "We're going up the windmill," as they cross the green. The place abounds in names of localities which have every one of them a meaning for us : the Turkey Pond, Crow Plain, Sunday Dip (do the boys still dodge church to splash about in its warm shallows ?), Pikefish Farm, Wolsey, Cheveney, Emmet Hill Lane, The Tat, Rat's Castle, Lughorse Lane, The Ring, Benover, Little Benover, the Ballast Hole, Collier Street, Two Bridges, Kenward, Bow Hill, the Barge River, dozens more. So that, if you come to live among us and have a feeling for these things, you may trace a whole multitude of peaceful histories which unite this country community with the England described by our poets in the fourteenth century, Chaucer and Langland. It has been all along an unostentatious, a good-tempered tradition, a work of sturdy character content with native fields and the honour of a local achievement.

But to that summary of a race of healthy, sensible, industrious and capable people one addition has to be made. We were never expecting to make it. We do not even now quite comprehend it, except in large terms of what may be demanded of us by those who know more than we do, and what we are prepared to do, endure, and give without arguing at the wrong moment. On the green, looking down the village street, a cross has now stood for some years. Upon its pedestal there are

inscribed the names of those who died, in His Majesty's service, during the war of 1914-1918. And here, in truth, these men, or boys, are not forgotten. They are remembered not as soldiers or sailors, but as some of our parishioners, this one clever at figures, that one given to practical jokes at the bakery, another who was to have married the beautiful Alice C. They have all come back to us. They left their rifles and bayonets, their belts and bandoliers (which they took much pride in) at the place appointed, and are always somewhere about our houses or farms, getting on with the things that in the end mattered to them and us, seeing that the barrels of sulphur for the hop kilns are delivered or that the old cob-nut plat is grubbed up and new fruit-bearing trees are put in.



### III

**I**N such a village as the one through which we have walked, some characters are to be found in whom a marvellous richness of the spirit of the place is concentrated. They are Shakespearean. That is, they illustrate that union of pervading reasonableness with lively curiosity which our dramatist exhibits in full. To them, and in them, life is many-coloured. I do not propose that we shall draw them out at a first meeting. That would be to contradict myself: these are wise men, and women. But one of their virtues is, that they are eminently companionable, and once they have accepted us as friends and of goodwill, they will not easily draw back from a desire to share their world freely with us.

There is an old English word, which has grown a little antique, but for which no good substitute is as yet ready, occurring to my mind in

this place. It is the term "a yeoman." Professor H. C. Wyld, in the most useful of modern dictionaries of our language, traces the history of its meaning from "manservant" or "steward"—with a deep *village* connection—on to an "owner of free land to the value of forty shillings yearly, thereby entitled to certain rights," and thence with the passage of the centuries to a "farmer cultivating his own land, a small land-owner." Some biographers inform us that Shakespeare's wife was the daughter of "a substantial yeoman." Without exploring the details further than this, I can say that the word is the nearest I know to expressing the kind of man who keeps our village going. "Peasant," which perhaps would once have had some suitability, has now ceased to be applicable here. Even such later ways of allusion as "the rustic," "the labouring man" do not quite fit our worthies, in this kind of village.

Mr. A. C. has been, ever since I can remember, the very picture of a substantial yeoman in our village. He has never tried to be anything else, but has shown throughout his life of more than seventy years that this may be a masterly kind of achievement, and of deeper importance, stronger influence, fuller variety than many forms of activity which might be supposed more noteworthy in the world. His function, since his early life, has been that of bailiff on our biggest and most successful farm. His old employer has departed this life some few years now, and in a manner A. C. has retired, but in fact he cannot by temperament retire until he is past moving his legs; so he continues to be connected with the farm and in the councils of the sons of his former master and friend. And he is for ever, so far as I can see, one of the unofficial rulers of the village.

If we happen to see him walking down the hill with his bag of fruit or vegetables intended as a present for someone, you will agree that there is authority visible in his outward figure. You remember something like the appearance he makes, in the paintings of Teniers, or perhaps it was he who was scanning the fields and plantations along "The Avenue" of Hobbema. That broad frame, that good round red-cheeked face, those bushy whiskers—the almost stately but very alert movement—they proclaim a local command. Yet it is so far from being anything of a tyranny that all our young men converse with him as freely and candidly as they do among themselves. To him, many problems of a village life are brought, and seldom in vain. Either he knows the answer, or he knows who knows. It might be a question of gardening, and if it is, it will be a curious one, since almost every one in the place is already

skilful in the subject. It might be something on farming alterations, or experiments, or equipment—a wide field of possibilities, in which his experience, memory and sense will seldom be at a loss. Perhaps some dilemma of personal conduct, of love and friendship or the opposite, may be submitted to his wise, honourable and still kindly old mind. Maybe a young man is proposing to deal with some property, is invited to speculate, is able to consider a big change in his business ; then A. C. may not be willing to press his own opinions on the case, but having all along in his own affairs kept the gift of getting advice which worked out well, he will soon be able to throw considerable light on the prospects.

In his time he has seen much, learned much, and has never felt the pride which refuses to admit that a man may learn from his betters ; it has been his intention always at least to be fit to bear them company. He perceives the general lines of interest and occupations and thinkings with which he is naturally not always concerned. He has tried most of the sports and pastimes of our country, and made acquaintance with many callings and professions. His speech is a constant, unforced but energetic attempt to state things fairly and in proportion.

With him will often be found—and the fact is one of some significance to one who would interpret our community—a contemporary of his, to whom also the younger generations come with affectionate trust and openness. This is the retired schoolmaster, who could almost be called a yeoman too, so much is he on that model—but he, of course, introduces another background and view of life, perfectly in harmony through almost half a century with the qualities of A. C. He has been, for so long a period, a source of information and reasonable judgments in this village community, one of the characteristics of which is that it respects accuracy and deliberate carefulness. Through him and his quiet presence, the local interest in music has been strengthened more than a little ; from his shelves many good books are passed round and enjoyed ; if it comes to a point of mathematics or other calculation as part of one of our discussions, his delightfully clear and intelligible way of working it out with us is not only of practical and immediate value but is also felt to justify the intellectual side of things, among men and women whose lives are more concerned with materials and manual skill. In short, he is the scholar whose abilities are honoured here and whose measured views have a great influence on the attitude of many to the world around them. In him, as in others of some eminence among us, a remarkable power of memory is constantly in use, which

provides interesting and profitable examples, parallels, suggestions even on topics such as he has rather observed than had the opportunity to test in personal practice.

This gentleman employs, in an informal kind of way, one or two worthies who could flourish in a novel by Thomas Hardy. Take for example S. M. He may be seventy years old by now, but nobody notices it and he does not. He has in his time done all sorts of work, so many that he often repeats the proverb at his own expense, "Jack of all trades, and master of none." He looks rather like Mr. Pickwick, had Mr. Pickwick been born to a great deal of tough labour, and beams forth behind his spectacles with a world of benevolence—yet his critical powers are there sure enough, as many a boy in the parish knows. For many years he drove the baker's van, and through that and other occasions he knows every corner not only of the village but of the district ; he knows the lands, the farms, the woods, the weather, the haunts of beast and bird. His cottage was the last in which I heard, in this village at least, some fragments of the ancient mummers' play of *St. George* ; and there I have listened with delight to his commentary on the doings of one and another, on the old ways and the new. I don't know how, but his personality is ever associated for me with rosy-ripe apples, and great wicker baskets of walnuts, and mighty barn doors with the sun staring in upon goodly stacks of fodder. Himself utterly frugal, he has the gift of making plenty attend him ; and you may be sure that wherever anything calls for immediate and unexpected action he will be first on the scene and first with a workable answer. If he has a foible, it is for his reminiscences of dialogues with the learned and the opinionated. Perhaps it was some question of a horse's illness, fifty years ago, when he was given peremptory orders as to the treatment due ; but, as he recites the conversation that passed, he knew the more excellent way, and he stuck to it after a number of laconic moves and parries which left him in fair possession.

His wife, "a woman peerless in her station," has as much good humour as he, and a similar quality of fine judgment in all that passes. She has the same delight in doing things well, and can do many exceedingly well (not excepting the making of home-grown wines). To speak with her on a dull day, when the news perhaps is none of the best, is to win a bit back from the fates. She has never thought of winning much herself. She and he, long ago, quietly accepted their lifework, and made their place. Good example was given her in her early years,

and the pattern is preserved in its original grace in all she does ; it may be that the state of society which she was shaped in is gone or going, but there is as yet no such difference that her household skill and her quiet mind are baffled.

Of the younger villagers, it may be briefly remarked that they have seen more of the world and have discovered more opportunities, without losing the plainness and steadiness of outlook which you cannot but feel in the whole visage of our streets and gardens. They are not the sort of people to select if you are thinking of writing a homily on the decadence of the Englishman. They will not do, if you are meditating a thesis on the Peasant or on the Prevalence of Superstition in Village Communities. Many of them are technically expert ; and still they have from the first a tradition which enables them to tell, like Hamlet, a hawk from a heronshaw (a Jack Herne, they call him, just as S. M. does). They have it in their hands to grow things, and build things, and drive things. But we must leave them talking with the ancients over the new machinery, or the old schooling.



#### IV

WITHOUT or with a magic carpet, we have now arrived in an English village of decidedly different aspect to that we have left in the Home Counties. It is one which, in spite of a large outer layer of fragile recent villas and bungalow affairs, presents much more of the mediæval in its outward appearance ; but that may be partly due to the fact that it is built in stone. The Georgian architecture with its bland white face has not affected it very obviously. Crowning a big hill, with a tremendous river valley under its eye, this village is grey, and its share of thatched roofs does not disturb that total look. Is it



only the illusion of its strong rough stonework, that it announces a life of strenuous and slowly modified farming and smallholding? The gardens here are small, the orchards scanty, as though the vast ploughlands around had always demanded too much of the inhabitants for any such amenities to extend; and the houses themselves, the walls about the closes, the stone fences along the lanes and the fields have a semblance of fortresses. "An Englishman's house is his castle"—the words take on a curious significance as we look at these cottages and farmhouses.

That inn there, for instance, the "Bear and Ragged Staff"—what a countenance of rugged durability it shows. With its massive chimneys, its bastions, its outbuildings, its thick walls, its angles and high gables, it might have been set up in ages of small wars and provincial feuds, the headquarters of some determined faction. It may not be as old as it looks, and that might be seven or eight hundred years, but the detail of an exact date does not matter much when we see so boldly expressed the genius of the place. The place is isolated, the winds blow fresh and eager over it, and if man will but be strong, nature offers him the material for his lasting establishment. The men who come to the "Bear and Ragged Staff," I take it, will be of a certain stoicism. There is in my memory a scrap of talk from the winter of 1939: enter a labourer, with a cheek like brown parchment and inscribed with records of fortune as much as any old parchment,—

*Labourer* : Got any bitter to-day?

*Landlord* : No, I'm sorry, Tom, none in the house—

*Labourer* : Got any mild?

*Landlord* : No, that's not come in yet.

*Labourer* : Got any good *rain-water* then?

With the inn, the church divides the domination of this hilltop cluster of homes in stone. The great house, with its ghosts of national history, has vanished altogether, though its place remains unoccupied except for a thicket of elder trees, and crab-apples, and sycamores. The church is glorious, and the people are proud of it, and keep it well. It is set on the highest ground, and its square tower though not lofty marches through the sky as grandly as though it were something much more ambitious. Its graves are arrayed at its foot, solid and erect stones, seeming too to be watching the lands stretched below their grassy terrace. The interior of the church is a chronicle of centuries extant in a number of carefully preserved forms exceedingly vivid—those sculptured heads



BABLOCK HITHE, OXFORDSHIRE  
Water colour by W. Russell Flint

along the wall—some, enigmatic portraits ; some, fantastic emblems ; one or two, studies of personal truth ; then, that full-length and agreeably plump statue of Queen Elizabeth, with her richly decorated costume ; or, for you to find by looking cleverly, the elaborate wood carvings of some master of scriptural idea ; again, the displayed and splendid copy of the Authorised Version of the Bible, 1611, appointed to be read in churches and in its form truly worthy of the national religion.

Many a footpath winds away from this centre through the farms, and towards lonelier farms, and it is no wonder that Matthew Arnold's Scholar Gipsy made this his haunt among others congenial to his dream. We might follow him into the valley of the Thames, down the stony desultory lane and then through the leys by the green track, to Bablock Hythe with its ferry. What a stillness, what a sacredness we find within a few moments—and still it is the village, and someone on business is hurrying past us to the farthest house. The blue distances beyond the high and casual hedges might go on for ever, and so this wide track might go, but at length it finds the wood, and passes the Physick Well, and brings us to the "stripling Thames," with the sunlight on the shallows, and the warblers in the rushes, and the horses loose to graze in the sweet pastures to the brim of the famous river. If you would



A MEMORY OF CLAVERING, ESSEX

Etching by F. L. Griggs

explore, I can hint at a grove of willows not far away, grotesque trunks and serpent boughs complicated into a place truly beyond the world ; but every good village owns some such capricious scene. In the other direction, the quarried Hurst shines to any blue sky, and indeed the sky seems unusually blue there ; the hillside burns red and orange, and its green crest is plumed with black fir-trees—a picture indeed for youth to eye with constant fancy, and for age to mark with revisitations of faith in the beauty of the scheme of things. This also is of the village.

But I shall insert here the words of an official memorandum : “ It is an ordinary village : it is not a show place. Submerged by an overflowing town, it would all go under together, and be lost in a suburb. But it is still a living village, a centre for people with country ways, and with miles of agricultural and purely rural areas behind them. Its character is formed by the old farms and cottages scattered round the church.” A census of its old farms and cottages, such of them as are at all characteristic, only runs to about forty entries ; and yet I believe that, if you are captured at all by the spirit of this tiny aggregation, you will have the impression of some much greater number of dwellings. At least, you will probably not notice at all whether there are few or many.

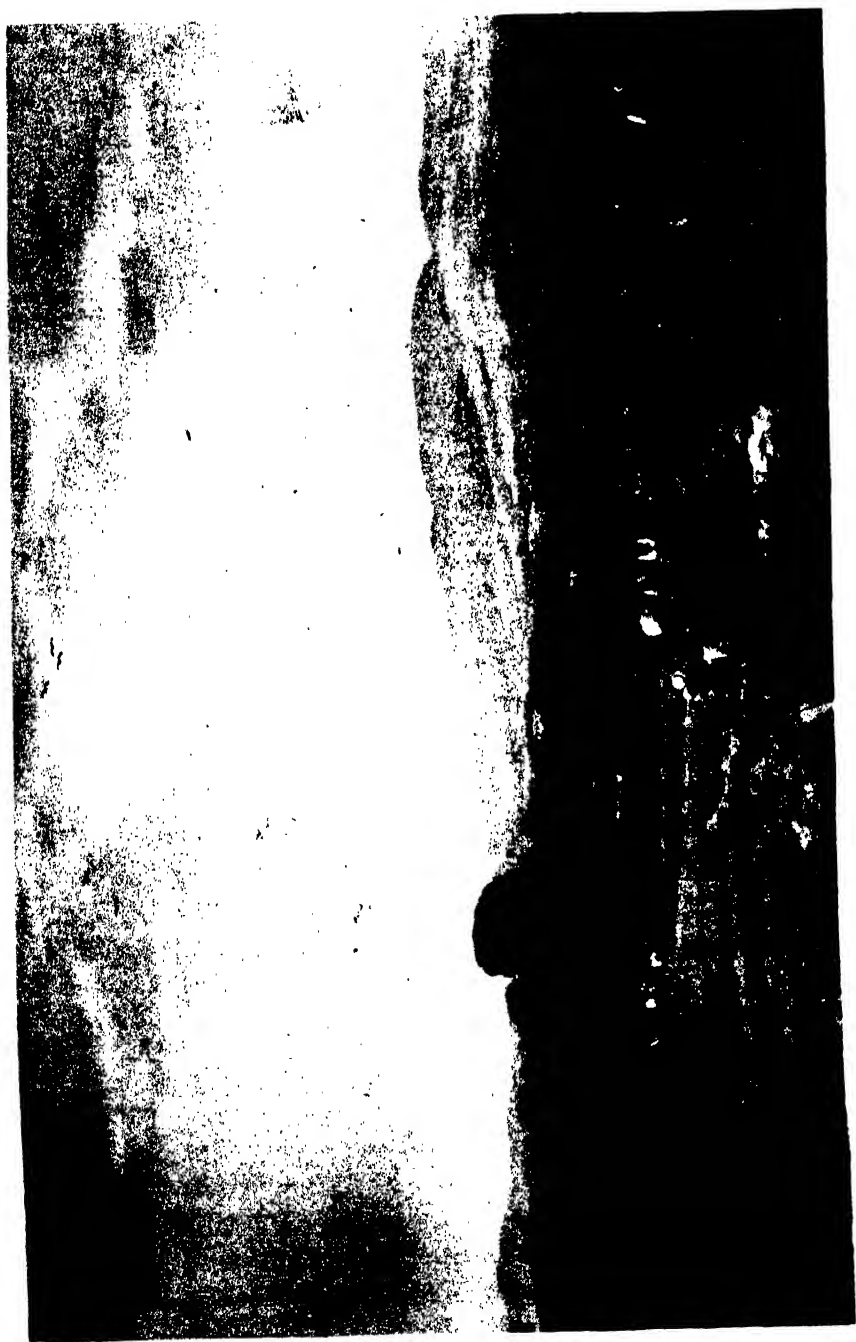
You will certainly not have converted the village, by too generous a sympathy, into one of those which worshippers in this field have long named and bepraised, honoured with verse or prose or painting ; it is an unadorned, unconsidered place when all is said. Nevertheless, like so many of these villages in England, its character is compelling, and emerges and surrounds the sense of those who pass that way beyond all reckoning in the terms of a census. I suggested it in the figure (which I desire may not be pressed too far) of a stubborn old fastness, a domestic fortification devised by rather lonely men to confront a rather austere though workable wild nature. At all events, there it stands yet, quiet, dignified, grey, and in command of its hill and vale.



## V

**A**T a distance of only a few miles from the village last sketched another has long charmed me, but its essence or intimation or phantasm is quite different. There is no particular claim to make for it, among the villages of England, except that it is a good one of its kind ; and it does not challenge attention where it lies on an off-road. It has not produced celebrities, and I suspect history has evaded it without difficulty.

Its charm is easily summed up—peace, or sweet content. But this is not an unusual attraction in villages anywhere. No : yet here the scene to which the by-way or bridlepath leads us is peculiarly communicative of such a blessing. We come out upon a broad and level green, restful to the eye at any season and elysian in the flowery months, along the margins of which, each in its own easy way, the main part of the



THE CRICKETERS  
Water colour by Peter de Wint

cottages appear. There is nothing rigid in the design ; the green wanders into corners and projections, and buildings care nothing for alignment ; but the whole is a model. These small cottages, thatched, timbered, colour-washed, or in ripe red brick, are just what they should be as the neighbours of that grassy arena ; wide enough to pasture all their cattle, and to enfold all their feasts and sports and children at play. I do not mean by this to allege that one finds in this village an idyllic pastoral life in detail. " Labour's only cow " is not the modern way, and wakes and Whitsun-ales and dancing on the green are rarer than we hear they have been. But the memory of a pastoral antiquity is persisting here, and if one's fancy were to assert that the merry milkmaid of Izaak Walton or a piping shepherd or a dance of harvesters were now in the picture it would not be false to the feeling of so unworldly, so gentle a place.

There is a post office. There is a butcher's shop. These valuable facilities of civilisation are commonly quite emphatic of their presence. Not so in this village. You come upon them with surprise, hiding away privately among the rest of the cottages. The village is, so to speak, private. Its outlying houses are beside or at the end of narrow lanes with straying hedges, as if they would be of no interest to any one but their tenants and the four seasons. A church in the fields is suddenly surprised, like a hare peering over a patch of oats. The highroad is not far away, but the distance may be measured in other values than miles. The speech of the people sufficiently declares that.

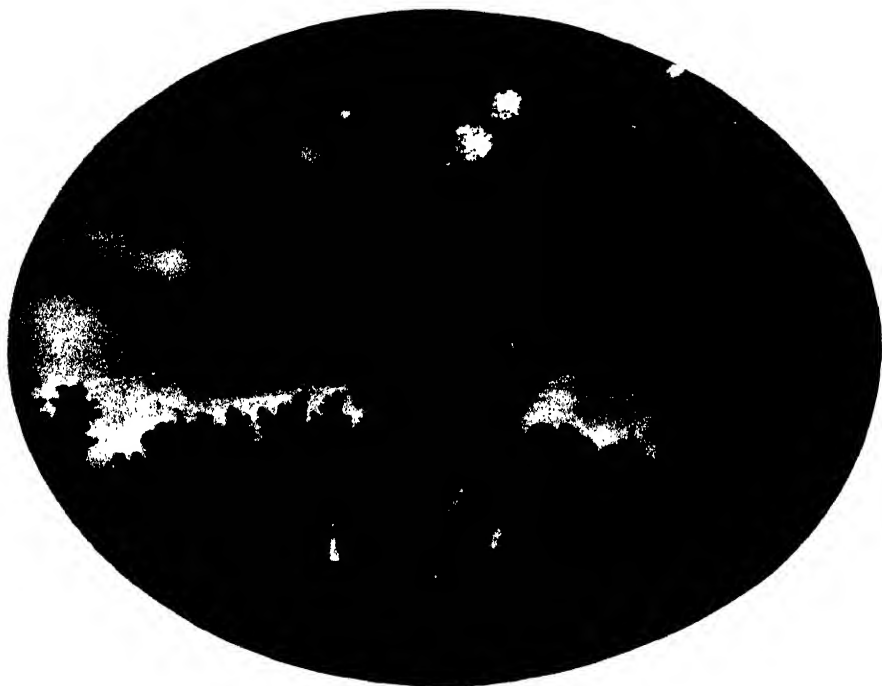
Where the population is so small, the wonder is that the community can do much beyond its separate occupations ; but it mostly finds things to do apart from those. A stranger may wonder even that the farm lands are cultivated as they are ; he may see the men who manage that, assembled on one occasion or another, and it will still seem remarkable to him that this little group of villagers, not all of them giants or even robust and potent in appearance, keep so many acres and so many animals in order. Besides that they find time and vigour for their cricket and football matches, at home and away, and then they see to it that the choir, and the bell-ringing, and social clubs and local councils continue from generation to generation.

Glancing back at the village on the green, I cannot repress a sigh of happiness that we have not as yet reformed our country (as Hamlet says) " utterly." I am afraid that the latest regulations on housing conditions, applied in coldness, might quite suddenly disenchant that scene.

What we have to do, and a new spirit will surely find the means, is to continue it while we improve the material conditions within it. But there is something more. The village must be still the villager's own, and that is not so easy as it sounds. Fortunately the Englishman on the whole perceives that he cannot merely escape into ruralism, or be a detached spectator of a delightful but unrelated way of life. It is in him to rejoin it, to be part of it, and in due time to be quite naturally one of the dancers on the green, or thatchers on the stack, or scythesmen in the lower field.

The days of the great houses in our country life have passed, though some illustrious survivals could be pointed out ; and yet it is reasonable to expect that the village will flourish anew. For years many have been inspired with the idea that its labour and its reward compose the best and happiest of lives, and it has been the subject of a host of writers, who have been at pains to discern and delineate the wisdom and the abilities of the English countryman, as well as to affirm the wealth and use which could be gained for the country by following him. It would be far from astonishing if, in the period of economic revision which is now expected after the War, something truly energetic came of all this ; if the village in the end proved the salvation and the fulfilment of England. Why, even those ardent lovers of yesterday who go about, God bless them, forming bodies for the purchase and maintenance of windmills may find that their piety has been converted into realism ; but we must see whether man can ever set his scientific novelties in a balance with the possibilities of simplicity.

Again travelling a few miles from a typical village, I take leave to pause at another which the connoisseurs found out years ago—a considerable, rambling place, with several mansions secluded behind stately walls, long drives and copious shrubberies and trees. What a village of great trees it is ; they have been planted with faith or imagination, and they build a huge archway over the road, wide as it is. A spacious kind of village, this, the creation and the care of a whole squadron of squires ; but it is on the river's banks that the stateliness of all the domain is finest. For here, a series of weirs produces below the main stream (and that is majestic) a chain of pools, ever in bright unrest, the beloved waterworld of bathers and anglers—one might add, lovers. Gardens and lawns approach this romantic and bowery and many-coloured river paradise, but from the village street, where the old houses rejoice in variety of shape and decoration and tint, a traveller might not guess it



FAIRLOP OAK AND FAIRLOP FAIR, ESSEX  
Water colour by S. H. Grimm

was there. It is like many of the beautiful things within the English village, unhonoured or uncursed with signpost or descriptive invitation. Should you hit on the narrow path behind the ruined mill (which is behind an unbeautiful wall), then you may have all the luxury of the first discoverer.

Maybe we should not always leave the pleasure that our villages afford to chance, for some of them come and go quickly. Events of local fame might be worth a wider circulation. There is one in a solitary yet not at all declining village, within an hour or so of Oxford, which might make one fancy that the ride had ended in Brittany. The Bampton Morris-dancers, a club of old and young men, blaze forth in all their bravery once a year. They strut and hop and frisk then, to the tune of the fiddler with his kit, in the market square, and are clever and merry enough to bring round them an even larger crowd than the cricket match in the field beyond the church, though that is a perfect summer



picture too. An "all-licensed fool," equipped according to eternal law with a bladder on a stick, and flushed alike with exercise and drink, scampers round among the dancers, with many complaints and jibes against the "lazy rascals," and is one of the most popular parts of the entertainment. It is an ancient flower-ritual, by all appearances, and exists not by revivalism but by continuity of tradition.

In such a village, tradition proceeds comfortably along and modernity does not dispute the right of way. Inevitably the population includes its proportion of bright and smart young men whose business is in the town and who are acquiring a "position" not much connected with the village in which they have run up a bright and smart little house. But it is not sentiment to remark that a picture drawn by an accurate hand more than a century since is still true to life in many of its small points and in its ultimate impression. "The Cottager" is still alive, and the village, anywhere at all remote from the big commercial hives, is still very much dependent upon what he hides under his battered hat :

True as the church clock hand the hour pursues  
He plods about his toils and reads the news,  
And at the blacksmith's shop his hour will stand  
To talk of "Lunun" as a foreign land.  
For from his cottage door in peace or strife  
He ne'er went fifty miles in all his life.  
His knowledge with old notions still combined  
Is twenty years behind the march of mind.  
He views new knowledge with suspicious eyes  
And thinks it blasphemy to be so wise. . . .  
Life gave him comfort but denied him wealth,  
He toils in quiet and enjoys his health.  
He smokes a pipe at night and drinks his beer  
And runs no scores on tavern screens to clear.

The fortunate lover of our unspoiled villages will know that once such an inhabitant is led on to talk without restraint, the lights and shadows of what at first looked unvaried become multitudinous ; the spirit of the village reveals itself in a leisurely but vivid versatility. It is seen, quite as happily as in the Georgics of Virgil, working away at a number of time-honoured tasks, summing up the problems of life afield or in the heart of man, conjecturing over the strangeness of some localities, some hours, recalling the triumphs or the disasters of the individual, noting the odd things which a country life encounters in the spheres of



*By courtesy of the Artist and King's College, Cambridge*

A YEOMAN FARMER  
Oil painting by Neville Lytton



*By courtesy of the Artist and R. Thompson, Esq.*

CLIFTON HAMPDEN, OXFORDSHIRE  
Oil painting by Gilbert Spencer



*By courtesy of the Artist and the Redfern Gallery, London*

THATCHING IN HAMPSHIRE  
Oil painting by Richard Eurich



Copyright of H.M. The King

A SCENE IN WINDSOR  
Water colour by Paul Sandby, c.1760



ENFIELD FAIR, 1848  
Oil painting by George Forster

the insect, the bird, the quadruped, the fish, the herb and flower and tree. This is the spirit which acknowledges that stones grow in a certain field, or reasons in favour of the horse-drawn plough against all comers, and it is to be allowed full freedom ; for in its own world it surely knows its part. But besides the lore and the practical intuition, the excellence of this old miscellany moves in the keen and apt phrase, the tune of the speech ; which you may call dialect if you will. It is a wording and a shaping of the earth earthy, and of the oak oaky, and the pity is that, as with the fascinating talk of men of intellectual and experimental greatness, it is exceedingly hard to do it justice in any attempted transcription.

You may collect specimens, or compile glossaries, which will be delightful as far as they go. The list of these is already legion. If one of the best may be mentioned, it is the work of the late Rev. Edward Gepp in the county of Essex, which he published only twenty years ago. But all the right country conversation is too subtle and involved in circumstance to yield to analysis, or rise up in its fullness from a record. It is of a kind with the voices of the thicket in the wind, or the sounds of the barnyard on the first blessed day of spring. But it can be awakened



HAYMAKERS AT DINNER  
Water colour by Thomas Uwins

by the deserving, in the "native heath"; and sometimes a ride in a market bus will be rich with it.

Yet another pleasant and natural way into the inner mind of our English village may sometimes be opened. At times there is, in any friendly little gathering away from the day's work, a tendency to get a song or two started. Maybe the merits of the singers, as singers, would not be considerable; but what will gratify the onlooker who is admitted without ado to the group is the queer selection of the songs. It is not a matter of what are officially called folk-songs, the study of some inimitable masters of the subject, but of a drifting element of popular pieces, one can hardly guess whence, or why they appealed sufficiently to be memorised as they have been. They are performed with a certain painfulness, or high seriousness of manner, for the most part, and are treated with corresponding respect—at least they were when I was last one of the winter night's audience. It is curious, now that I reflect on it, but I have never heard one of them again. Each man, who is at all able to contribute to these solemnities, appears to have his own property in the



VILLAGE GOSSIPS

Oil painting by J. J. Chalon

way of old songs. Nobody indeed would want to borrow them from him on sheer grounds of music and poetry, but they illustrate the country mind and the different ways in which the village feels about the interests of life and occurrences of history.



When Long Henry has ended his doleful ditty about an emigrant and his mother, and has settled back in his chimney corner to puff smoke at the ceiling in deep content, it is possible that we shall have appreciations of a local incorrigible. In fact, he suddenly comes in, amidst croaks of welcome—old Banjo Bert—marvellously attired in a kind of game-keeper's velveteens with foreign coins for buttons. He takes his time with the company, who accept his very presence for a millennium of wit and drollery, and then, seeing you in your place, and being in sober verity as kind a man as there is, he devotes himself to your edification and recreation. He supposes you are interested in what is old and valuable—why then, he produces a monkey's head carved in bone, or a snuff-box which you never will be able to open unless you have the secret ; these are really old, these, however, he wouldn't part with for a mint of money. Then, you must be a clever man if you can follow all his riddles, or you must be a slow man if you can't catch his meaning—listen to this, "I saw a white blackbird sitting on a wooden tombstone." . . . This roving gentleman must not be lightly laughed away. He has come down the ages. He has an eye. He lives so, as to sharpen some sense that does not grow within the pale of normal citizenship. He can do lots of things when the appliances of this century are missing or do not fit ; but that is not his faculty alone in an English village.





THE WAYSIDE SMITHY  
Sepia drawing by Samuel Palmer

## VI

**A**N old friend of mine, Mr. H. J. Massingham, has been busy collecting all kinds of country implements, which he describes in a delightful book. Many of them are superseded and perhaps almost nobody now in a village would recollect the uses for which they were intended. After all, the effects of industrial progress on common life have been going on intensively for a very long time. William Wordsworth, who died in 1850, lamented the disappearance of the

spinning-wheel from the cottages he knew many years before that. And there were all sorts of less prominent devices of country craftsmen which shared that dismissal. Tools, methods and the passion for accomplishments have changed, and one starts up in surprise in reading the novels of Thomas Hardy at descriptions of much that was once familiar and necessary, now never thought upon.

It is not possible, however, to do without the craftsman of the old leaven ; he is still with us—the maker of gate and fence, the builder of rick and lodge, the sign-writer, the weaver of basket and hurdle, the worker in old woods who can reproduce famous styles of furniture, here and there the ingenious craftsman in iron, not to mention all the aspects. Without joining the ranks of the mediævalists, one may easily think the day could come when our village should be newly interested in its own handiwork, and resuscitate forms of skill and contrivances belonging to them which have been under a cloud.

The signs of the local dexterity of yesterday are as yet quite abundant in most of these places. The large and handsome clocks which are still on duty in houses of some tradition often bear the name of a maker who flourished in a village. They look like the firm predestined chroniclers of unhasty hours. The present clock-maker could make more of them, if the economic system encouraged him. There are still at one farm and another examples of those majestic wagons which reminded Thomas Hardy of three-deckers on the ocean, productions of wrights who “ dreamed not of a perishable fame ” but brought a collated knowledge of materials and processes into the service of a hundred years. And the business did not end without elegance. These vehicles were finished as nicely as the faces of the grandfather clock. Incidentally, the bold colours which adorn the labour of village agriculture are not to be missed. No luxury automobiles are more richly dight than our farm gear, in kingfisher dyes ; paint is a pleasure to many a village. A stack of prussian-blue and ochre-red baskets beside a primrose-yellow cart, with the quieter yellow of the haystack and the faded rose of the cow-houses beyond, are our primitive achievement.

The local arts, of course, may be seen more in their glory at the village church, and without having taken a survey I should be willing to assert that through the land one village in two has a church of interest. In some parts, as East Anglia, the explorer can hardly go wrong. Restoration in the last century has admittedly reduced the treasury of country craftsmanship in these churches, but much remains. The carpenter and

mason and smith since the Norman Conquest have left us screen and font, pulpit and door, pew and chest and lock. For my part, I can never cease to marvel at the noble designing and the variety of memorials within the churches and in the churchyards ; some of them on the walls, some among the flagstones of the aisles and passages, so many standing above the grass and its wild flowers. It is not the elaborate sculptures celebrating the wealthiest and most distinguished families who have held the manor or the hall that are in my mind's eye now, for these must have been largely imported from the studios of the metropolis ; it is the plain tablet or the modestly embellished headstone. We talk of calligraphy nowadays with respect, and a man with a high sense of it may make a great name—the late admirable Eric Gill, for example ; but the anonymous artisan of the English village during its mild career has been endlessly “correct” in this pure art, so far as it is executed with the chisel on stone. A few minutes spent in examining the floor of such a church as Dorchester, Oxon., will illustrate this unambitious mastery ; a longer and wider study will show how the freedom of the individual craftsman has flourished without ever deserting the principles of symmetry and clarity and dignity. Some time in the Victorian period a change of religious sensibility intervened upon that native classicism, but it is still a striking element ; and wherever too the church walls are hung with old hatchments, and the Royal arms, and perpetuations of deeds of alms or of bell-ringing, the strength and sense of our village memorialists appear as well. If you are curious about the character of the Englishman, not so much at one moment of national experience as in the main, these are the kind of evidences which arose spontaneously and may be called profound.

When the poet Wordsworth returned to this country from one of his continental tours, he was particularly delighted with the sight, suddenly become uncommonly vivid, of cattle moving and feeding in the fields where and as they would. Perhaps there is no such rarity in that arrangement to-day as would deserve his special patronage ; but the English village has always been very well shared between its human inhabitants and the others. Horse, cow, pig, sheep, fowl have a good standing here, and know their way about as well as the postman ; from this understanding between them and their guardians it has come that England has contributed so much and obtained due reward in the world of live stock beyond seas. An affection, which is seldom assessed in detachment, has always existed between the farmer's man or boy and his



BOATBUILDING NEAR FLATFORD MILL, SUFFOLK  
Oil painting by John Constable



CHILDREN RUNNING DOWN HILL

Water colour by M. Birket Foster

beasts. I remember not many years ago that there was a strike called of agricultural labourers. They came out ; but, as I went on my morning rounds, I saw them shyly hanging about near the pens and stables, unable to leave their horses and cows untended for more than a few hours. As has been often said, these men are not sentimental about animals' rights, and can and must be at times abrupt and hard ; there is no mercy for a mole though he is a beautiful little fellow, no question about ferrets being sent into the rabbit-warren when the market wants rabbits, and no remorse when the clever old pig who used almost to talk about the weather and crops is to become pork—but the rule is to be kind. So, a Wordsworthian happiness is to be found daily in any village lane or lea, and the scene is rich with sauntering herds and flocks, unanxious, living their own lives, obedient only to those whom they recognise as their masters and victuallers. :

If much that these brief pages contain be found laudatory and optimistic, I cannot help it, and do not regret it ; but it is not to be explained away as due to the bias of association. These things, touched upon with a reserve in fact, are actual. Another characteristic of many English villages rises in fair forms to my reflection : the happiness of children in such places. Many dreary and imprisoned villages there are, under the shadow of huge industrial organisation, and blackened nature might shriek to heaven against what they impose on young life ; but it is to the better and best that we must look, and of those there is abundance.

Our picture of an English village naturally includes groups of children at their games or on their travels, for which there is ample room and shining liberty. The child Charles Lamb and some of his companions, in the days of King George III, set forth on daylong expeditions in the spirit of the explorer who was then attempting to trace the Nile to its source ; and the same adventurous pastime is known to the children of our countryside in the reign of King George VI. For just beyond the houses of the village the wide territory is spread still : the merry meadow stream still ranges on from jewelly shallow to sleepy shadowy pool ; the pigeons still fluster with vast din through the cool and hushed wild-wood ; the skylarks arise with their invincible singing from somewhere in the young corn towards the fleets of sunshine clouds. The bluebells flood the brake, the cowslips tassel the dyke in their multitude as the season advances, and the hedgehog is surprised on his way through the old fence with its snail-shells and tumbled cones and crab-apples, or the lizard and grass-snake are there for a moment by the brushwood pile ; it is a fairyland of natural secrets, and must be the best school in the world. When we have time again to think over the preservation of rural England, may the vision of the child in the meadows be constantly present to the minds of our counsellors and law-makers.

The subject cannot be left, even in these brief paragraphs, without one word for the "charm of birds" which blesses the English village. A villager might not be heard often to refer to it, and possibly he would have professional reasons for objecting to the busy beaks which, perhaps, do not always help his fruit trees ; but his orchards and gardens and hedgerows and spinneys and ponds have enriched the village with a delight unequalled elsewhere. Not for long in the year is the chorus silent, but when it returns in its full wonder one may think anew of the English village and the Latin poet's lines as transferable to it :

O fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint  
Agricolas !

Here the singers congregate, and I have stayed awake through nights in March to witn ss as far as the eye may and to hear in all its immortality the hymn they sing to the coming sun out of hedges as yet leafless or nearly. The thing is a triumph and a mystery. But perhaps not more so than the single storm-thrush's loud melody in the winter twilight ringing with utter confidence from the tip of some bare tree against the brassy light ; or than the robin's pure fluting from the top of the old spade in



THE WOODCUTTERS  
Oil painting by John Linnell

the garden, while the old lady shuts up her fowls for the night. Let those who know their birds give this theme its full utterance, as so many have done ; but let the lover of the English village not fail to reckon this as a part of its inheritance, not less noteworthy than its architecture or its personalia.

And then, however widespread through the peoples of the world the gospel of flowers may be, nowhere has it been longer accepted and beloved than in these villages of ours. It is a topic which admits of no novelty at this time, unless the expert gardener will tell us of changes and improvements, and discoveries which concern the eager florist of the village ; but there is no resisting the radiance and fantasy and perfume of it all. These cottages of ours, be it confessed, are often " battered and decayed " and of nothing but an odd or pathetic beauty in themselves, but give them their charm of gardens and they are beyond criticism. One has passed so many and so many of them in all their coloured masquerade, frolic and gentle ; no need to sort out their flowers and their trees with scientific precision. Enough to dream again on a winter's day of the lovely profusions which the villager accepts as the ordinary and unlaboured due of the calendar : the polyanthus, the crocus, wallflower,



pansy, nasturtium, tulip, lavender, stock, tiger-lily, sunflower would merely begin the catalogue. The rose is well attended. With the flowers, one has a mist of remembrance of the bushes and shrubs, the currant and gooseberry, the privet, holly, box and myrtle—the ivy, the jessamine, the vine on the walls and about the porch—the whole a chance-medley but a true garland for our village spirit. The matter does not end there, for along the path to the well or the allotment the half-civilised flowers are as welcome, above all the honeysuckle pink and white, the vetches yellow and blue, and the great and small trumpets of the bindweed. And one word more for some of our trees, for the limes before the old shops, with the south-west wind and the summer shower in them ; for the walnut-tree, especially when its winter boughs and twigs on a pale sky make so delicate a network ; for the yew in the churchyard, with its gloom and grandeur. Or we may look out over the stone fence and the goose-walk at the brown and honestly ugly pollards round the spring, the grey-silver and simply exquisite aspens along the track beyond ; and light upon “the delicious green patches, the islets of wilderness amidst cultivation,” the flamy gorse and powder-green juniper which survive delightfully within the immediate bounds of the village. The pigeons and the bees may make an undersong all this time, or the lustier sounds from trough and midden.

If an individual in 1940, writing on these affairs, were assailed as a pedlar of his own caprices, he might protect his case by allusion to the remarkable literature which his countrymen have already produced in the same enthusiasm and which has been on the increase for the past half-century. It includes not only direct interpreters but some of our greatest imaginative creators, from Jane Austen to Thomas Hardy. The direct interpreters may be grouped roughly under one or two great names from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. For the sterner, the pessimistic view of an English village, the poet George Crabbe was perhaps the earliest spokesman, and nobody has beaten him in his way though the modern anti-Arcadian has had greater licence to mention some of his dark anatomies. For the temperate appreciation of the entire village, without social questionings or presages of upheaval, Gilbert White of Selborne is immortalised, though he professed to offer little more than natural history. The verse of John Clare, a villager of peculiar vision, displays the surprising multiplicity of action and passion, of character and accomplishment found within the walk of life to which he was born. A lady of extraordinary knowledge and sympathy, Mary



VIEW OF SELBORNE, HAMPSHIRE, 1789  
From Gilbert White's *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*

Mitford, has put forward the brighter side of village life, indoors and out, in a classic which still lives and still answers particular moments perfectly. To these originals most subsequent writings may be broadly referred ; but latterly, and on very good grounds, the authors of village books have been more and more inspired by the figure, one might almost say of Piers the Plowman, at all events of the man and woman who form the country community. The text is "See yonder stubborn lump of flesh who sings behind his spade," but it is developed into an exposition of his works and days as being still the vital part of English life. This man must go on, with restored assurance and with fuller opportunities.

It would be silly to pretend that every villager is the exemplar of this rustic ability. The difference between man and man is not confined to any one circle. Leadership is called for in the village as elsewhere, and is not found invariably. But, when it appears, things prosper, the best is likely to be maintained, the work is done and the games are played. It is one of the satisfactions of life in an English village to become acquainted with one or other of the men and women on whom the fabric rests most. These have silent authority, and live for anything but material advantage. No weather is so wild, no circumstance so unpromising but

they will be fixing up something at need. They are not only resourceful ; they have a courtesy which one may sometimes realise only at an interval of time from some particular piece of valuable arrangement or decision.

It may be asked where the most gracious and perfect of English villages are to be found. And the answer is not within my power to give. To judge by recent preferences, the “ Cotswold constellation ” and the East Anglian kind with their spacious and fine churches must compete for the highest award. If one had no more of the whole multitude than these, it would be still a marvellous possession of the sense and spirit. I may mention a trio of villages which obtain a place in the notes of Mr. Charles Bradley Ford on this comparative study : he is speaking “ of the village that spreads into several distinct clusters—one, perhaps, around a green of its own, another along a tree-fringed lane, a third centred round the churchyard or the pond. Composite villages of this type are Finchingfield in Essex, Hartest in Suffolk and Steventon in Berkshire—which, it may be added, are three of the most charming in the country.” These indications come from one of the keenest judges of the English village living ; but, as he also remarks, “ the charm of the English village lies in its fortuitousness.” There is no real way of directing the stranger to the place which, with this as a condition, will appear to him pre-eminently adorable or ready for his prolonged sojourn. But he has a choice of a great many, and will probably come to regard one favourite village as having more virtues than the others, and he will be right ; for it is only by deep and sweet intimacy that these will be revealed, by a single love-affair.



# ENGLISH CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS

JOHN BETJEMAN

Cities and towns, the various haunts of men  
Require the pencil ; they defy the pen :  
Could he, who sung so well the Grecian fleet,  
So well have sung of alley, lane or street ?  
Can measured lines these various buildings show,  
The Town Hall Turning, or the Prospect Row ?  
Can I the seats of wealth and want explore  
And lengthen out my lays from door to door ?

*Rev. George Crabbe : THE BOROUGH*

## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

**N**OT until you have been away from it, as has the author of this book for more than a year, do you realise how friendly, how beautiful is the meanest English town. Not the most magnificent scenery, misty mountains, raging seas, desert sunsets, or groves of orange can compensate for the loss of the Corn Exchange, the doctor's house, tennis in suburban gardens, the bank and the bank-manager's house, the rural garages, the arid municipal park, the church clock and the Jubilee drinking fountain. Even a town like Wolverhampton looks splendid through Memory's telescope, while tears of homesickness blur the focus of Blandford's market square and the grey, shut-in climb of Bodmin's

main street. Sitting here, remembering the provincial towns of England, I wonder why it is that they hold me, as they do thousands of my countrymen, with a spell that not all their obvious faults can break. Their harmony and proportion were frequently damaged (far more effectively than they have been since by bombs) by modernistic shop fronts, pretentious gleaming buildings and enormous cinemas : they are girded about with semi-detached villas : they have been chopped into and straightened out for the convenience of motorists who gave them hardly a glance as they roared through them in those days of no time and too much petrol, before this war started. Why is it then, that they are so attractive ?

Possibly it is because English people who live in towns retain the country talent for gardening. Where there is no garden, back or front, wherein to plant flowers (now vegetables) there is a window box. Thus it is that the country seems to creep right into the town, growing more defiant as it thins. Possibly, too, the visitor finds himself sharing, unconsciously the local pride in the place. Though few people in England are borough-conscious (with a sense of loyalty to an area demarcated by some Municipal Reform Act of the late nineteenth century) most inhabitants of towns of all sizes have an immense pride in the place from the earliest doorway to the latest bomb crater.

When exploring, for the first time, one of these pockets of English history, local pride and marked character, the approach I like to make is by railway, for from the railway line you get an impression of the surrounding country, undisturbed by the adjuncts of a main road. The space before the station is lined first by a row of once successful shops, now less successful as the station has come to be less used. A road cuts for a few hundred yards through new brick villas to the heart of the old town. This road is probably called "Station Row," the name in white on a blue tin background affixed to the bright red wall of the side of a house. The villas are of a type not later than 1910, for few railway stations were built after that date ; they are two-storeyed, probably bow-fronted and may be relieved here and there with white brick dressings and varieties of stained glass in the panels of the front door. They each have trim little gardens with privet hedges and squeaking cast iron gates painted green or plum. An aid to the date of those villas may be gleaned from the names, generally written on the glass pane above the hall door : memories of the Crimea, the Indian Mutiny, the Jubilee or the Boer wars, basking in varieties of signwriter's lettering on gate, pillar and panel.

On reaching the High Street or Market Place, I use considerable discretion about the choice of an hotel. Many a thoughtless motorist has been taken in by new paint on the exterior or a wealth of half timber or a reference in a road book. Personally I always prefer rather seedy exteriors ; a house which is not owned by a chain of hotels—places with the words "Family and Commercial" outside, and lace curtains giving a vista of brown wallpaper, a mahogany side-board, bottles of H.P. Sauce and steel engravings. Here there are usually feather beds, a hot water bottle and a lively trade in the bar with local men.

My next step is to take a walk to the biggest stationers and consult one of the revolving stands of views ; there I generally find postcards, taken by a local



*By courtesy of Walker's Galleries, London*

THE THAMES NEAR GORING  
Water colour by H. Jutsum, 1816-1869



TOTTENHAM VILLAGE IN 1822  
Water colour by George Scharf the Elder

*By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

photographer, of the country houses in the neighbourhood, the war memorial, the Cottage Hospital, the High Street, the Parish Church exterior and interior and who knows but that among them might not be a view of some old custom held annually in the town or of a cavern with stalactites, a 'folly' in a park, a medicinal spring, or some other local matter of interest which would escape the casual visitor. I also buy a local guide. This may take the form of one published by a distant firm and paid for by the advertisements of which it mostly consists, of the town's tradesmen, or if the stationer, as so often is the case, was also a printer, it might be written and printed in the town itself. In either case it will contain nothing but praise about everything in the place from the very scanty remains of a Norman castle by the river, to the red and brown terracotta frontage of the Town Hall. It will also tell me of any prominent person born in the town or connected with it and this may be someone so totally unexpected as Robert Browning or Captain Webb or Lillywhite. At the local stationers, too, may be a book by a local author of talent wedged in between the limp leather editions of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Nor will I forget to buy the local newspaper and soak myself in neighbouring parish news and rows of the district council.

Round the parish church are narrow alleys and similar alleys lead off the High Street. These are the oldest parts of the town, the relics of the age of carts and country fairs. If there is light I would walk back from the stationers to the hotel by these alleys with the aid of the map in the guide book. They run the length of the garden of a town house, lilacs appear over the high brick wall and beyond them can be heard the twang of a tennis racket in the evening as the bank manager's children go on for as long as the light lasts. One side of the passage is garden wall, the other is cottages, small, squalid, red brick, built in the days of Chartists on the back garden of a house in the High Street for a century now given over entirely to commerce. And turning round I am able to survey the backs of the houses in the High Street. These are often most informative: steep gables appear with leaded windows of the seventeenth century; another house is hung with tiles arranged in patterns, another reveals timber construction of a sixteenth century cottage on to which an imposing house has been built to face the High Street in the late Georgian period; another house, dull enough on the High Street front when it was faced with terracotta by the shopkeeper who owned it, so as to be in line with the 1880-Renaissance of the Town Hall, reveals itself at the back as a handsome Georgian town house with a bow window, a neat brick elevation, the panes of brown glass in whose windows reflect here and there scooped hollows of late sunlight. Newbury is a town in which the side lanes take you straight from the twentieth century to the eighteenth. But every old town of England has these alleys which suddenly reveal how once the place must have appeared. Out again in the High Street I watch the upper storeys of the houses, above the shops, where here and there a Venetian window or a bow window with a delicate iron balcony or an old gabled house emerges from the Commerce at its feet. The shops too are a pleasure. Chemists





*Elegant Chariots, Barouches & Post Chaises.  
Handsome Black Carriages & Horses. Phases & Velvets for Funerals.*

THE HEN AND CHICKENS HOTEL, BIRMINGHAM  
19th century advertisement

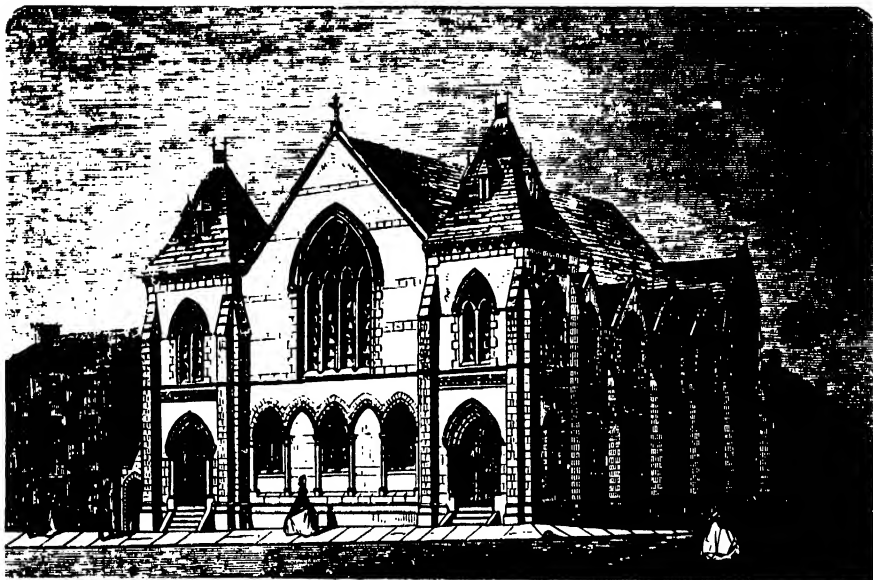
shops in provincial towns have often preserved the dignified and convenient interiors of the early Victorian era—rows of little wooden drawers with the names of their contents in black lettering on a gold background, above them old round jars with similar lettering and in the window the big coloured glass bottles of the last century. Here and there in a poor quarter of the town there may be one or two old shop fronts with the square panes and bowed front and neat carving around the door and across the fascia. Personally I most enjoy the atmosphere of the town's emporium where there are those elevated railways running from various counters to the cash desk and where incandescent gas blooms amid brass rods suspending underwear and curtain fabrics.

In the Hotel, with the aid of Kelly's Directory—there is generally an old edition in the Commercial Room—and the plan of the town in the local guide, I have a pleasant evening working out the history, situation and architecture of the place. The best guide books of all are old ones published in the last century, Black's, Murray's, etc., but these are not always easy to get; the next best is Kelly's Directory. I have never understood why this painstaking firm does not publish a separate volume of the descriptive information it gives at the head of each place in its county directories. From Kelly, which has a thorough and



HANCOCK'S GLASS SHOP, BIRMINGHAM  
19th century advertisement

uncritical account of the town, I learn that its streets are lighted by gas, that it returned two members to Parliament until the Reform Bill, that the branch railway was opened in 1875 (thus confirming the date of the houses in Station Row) that the Parish Church was restored in 1860, again in 1875 when a new chancel was added, that the Town Hall was built in 1887, that there is a rope factory at Brick End and that there is a market on Tuesday, that the subsoil is gravel, that the brickfields are now disused, besides a heap of other information which the average guide book with its bias in favour of what is fragmentary and "ancient" (pre-1700) omits altogether. For instance, I read that there is a Unitarian Church built in 1776. This will be worth going to see. On the following morning after a considerable effort to find the key, the old oak door of a modest brick chapel reveals an interior of box pews, high pulpit, clear glass windows and Chippendale Communion Table, untouched since the days when black-gowned preachers thundered against Arminius or Calvin, and godly souls drank in their instructions while children watched the bluebottles crawling up the sunny glass window, over the top of the pew. It is a mistake to suppose that in a country town the old parish church is always the most ancient building. Alas, too often it has been sumptuously restored in the last century to which the taste of the present



CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL, GUILDFORD  
19th century engraving

for powder blue hangings, Margaret Tarrant pictures in the 'Children's Corner' and unstained oak 'kneelers' has been added, so that little beyond the proportions of the old interior remains. Only by worshipping in the church, at an early Communion service, do I forget the restoration and learn to love the building. The outside may be fine and there may be a photograph of the interior before 'restoration' in the vestry. But the nonconformist chapels, especially those belonging to Unitarians, Moravians, Quakers and Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists are worth seeing, outside at any rate. Up to 1840, they are graceful; later than that they are often strikingly original—more so than the dull copying restoration of the buildings of the Establishment. If the town is large enough for a 'chapel of ease' to the Parish Church, this will probably be worth seeing and Kelly will give the name of the architect. If it be Street, Seddon, Pearson, Brookes, Ferrey, Blomfield, Scott, or if it appears to have cost a lot of money (Kelly often gives the cost) you may count on finding an imposing Victorian building, of bold proportions and with good carved stonework. It will probably have been built either (1) as a result of a row between the High Church members of the parish church congregation who found that place of worship too 'low' or (2) the reverse or (3) as a mission to the poorer part of the town fired by the readers of the excellent novels of Charlotte M. Yonge in the latter half of the nineteenth century when the social conscience of the Established Church awoke to vigour. Besides the buildings there is the local museum. Here, there are sure to be



CLIFF BRIDGE TERRACE AND THE LOCAL MUSEUM, SCARBOROUGH  
Water colour by Kenneth Rowntree

water colours of the place done in the early nineteenth century, when almost anyone of sensibility who put brush to paper was able to catch the atmosphere of what must have been the most beautiful town architecture in the world. If there is no museum there are generally some old water colours and topographical oil paintings hanging in the Town Hall. The Corn Exchange, the Assize Court and the local Doctor's house will also be worth a visit. For some reason Doctors and Solicitors manage to inhabit the most imposing Georgian houses in a small town and often enough these houses have carved oak staircases, of the eighteenth century, ceilings with plaster cherubs and marble mantelpieces and panelled rooms. East Anglia, Wilts, Dorset and Salop are particularly rich in them.

The architectural part of the investigation, prepared from Kelly and the local map, is not quite completed. On the inner outskirts of the town there is a row of houses called Albemarle Villas or Clarence Crescent or Nelson Square, indicative of the late Georgian era, the time of George III and his sons, of spas and watering places. Here you may find that greatest British contribution to architecture after the Perpendicular style, the austere Georgian stucco villa of proportions so subtle—tall oblong windows with thin wooden glazing bars on the ground floor, square windows some distance along and broad eaves, low pitched slate roof and solid oblong chimney stacks—that it will fit into any landscape and enhance any colour with which its tenant may choose to wash the chaste exterior. Notice particularly the ironwork of the balcony and verandah and the fence around the

square or shrubbery in front—if it has not been taken by over-zealous local authorities.

Sometimes I draw a blank, sometimes a name or a date in Kelly promises too much ; but I can recollect no English town which is devoid of interest and if there are no old buildings to see, there is always pleasant entertainment to be got from the modern ones and instruction and friends to be found among the inhabitants. Soft, friendly welcome of the little book-lined study of the local antiquary ! Narrow hall, with tea and warm fire below the marble mantel-piece, ticking presentation clock and yellowing collection of photographs ! Shelves of local poets and green bound proceedings of the County Archaeological Society ! Cold wide hall of the rectory, brown theological shelves in the Rector's study, College group and ordination portrait, college crest and maybe, college oar ! Sweet shyness of the rector's youngest daughter by the little wicket gate across the lawn. The church tower among the trees ! How often have I had tea and talk with friendly rectors and walked back through winding streets or out to where the newest houses meet the country. Then what a pleasure it is to speculate on how he made his money who built yonder semi-Tudor villa, planted that rock garden, stuck with stone enough to fill a cemetery ; to gaze through into front rooms where the inevitable sideboard looking-glass reflects the biscuit barrel and the street again. Or in the morning, what pleasant suburban sights meet my eye as I walk to the station bound for some other town. I am reminded of that moving passage about a provincial suburb in Gissing's story *Fate and the Apothecary* describing, I think it must be, an outskirt of Exeter :

'Farmiloe. Chemist by Examination.' So did the good man proclaim himself to a suburb of a city in the West of England. It was one of those pretty, clean, fresh-coloured suburbs only to be found in the west ; a few dainty little shops, everything about them bright or glistening, scattered among pleasant little houses with gardens eternally green and all but perennially in bloom ; every vista ending in foliage and in one direction a far glimpse of the Cathedral towers, sending forth their music to fall dreamily upon these quiet roads. The neighbourhood seemed to breathe a tranquil prosperity. Red cheeked emissaries of butcher, baker and grocer, order books in hand, knocked cheerily at kitchen doors and went smiling away ; the ponies were well fed and frisky, their carts spick and span. The church of the parish, an imposing edifice, dated only from a few years ago and had cost its noble founder a sum of money which any church-going parishioner would have named to you with proper awe. The population was largely female.

This describes late Victorian England, but the same scene exists in provincial towns to-day. Main roads have swept through the delicate textured high streets, cobbles have been replaced by tarmac and multiple stores have drained sedate old Oriental warehouses of their trade, garages have replaced the smithies, little smelly vans have ousted the pony carts ; but still the suburb remains the sunny abode that Gissing knew ; still of a workday, before the war, you could hear the bell of a muffin man and still of a Sunday, a good crowd came to choral matins in

shining Victorian churches where pew rents were still paid and where visiting cards were still fixed in a little brass socket at the entrance to the pew.

Lastly come the various types of inn. Fake half timbering is very popular for cocktail bars of larger hotels, where it is a cheap and convenient method of turning a shed in the yard, formerly a scullery or pantry, into the semblance of what many people fondly imagine was Shakespeare's England. These big hotel bars, are almost always patronised by motorists, visitors, strangers and the richer stratum of the country town, not by the local people who prefer stone or tile floors, wooden benches, yellow wallpaper in imitation of grained wood, a framed advertisement for beer on the walls. This old type of inn interior is unpopular with brewers who like palms, little tables, stained glass and who discourage standing up against the bar. In many towns now, the least spoiled bars are those in the neighbourhood of the railway station, built at some expense in the Victorian era, with mahogany, engraved glass, brass fixtures and gas or electroliers, all in such a sumptuous durable material that the brewers have not had the heart to spoil them with refurnishing.



WREN'S TOWN HALL AND THE CASTLE, WINDSOR  
Water colour by John Piper

## A CHOICE OF CATHEDRAL, UNIVERSITY AND COUNTRY TOWNS

**I**N so short a book as this I cannot describe in adequate detail even a single English town, among the many there are, as good as unnoticed by all save Kelly, which are worthy of the most searching description. In many of the larger towns, buildings have been destroyed by the Nazis and I might find myself describing a church or terrace or house which is now less than a shell. But no-one imagines that a building that has been shattered by bombs is irreparable. After the last war many of the Cathedrals and churches of Northern France were restored in such a way that the most trained eye could hardly detect when the rebuilding had occurred. Recent bombings have blown out a lot of very ugly stained glass, a long way after the pre-Raphaelites. Incendiaries have burned much unwelcome woodwork in churches which, for the last sixty years, have probably been little more than shells of their mediaeval or Georgian selves. Nor does a town disappear from bombing. My friend, Mr. John Piper, the war artist, who was sent to Bath to make a picture of the damage, writing to me says, "I was miserable there indeed to see that haunt of ancient water-drinkers besmirched with dust and blast . . . But the air of Bath was still there and the back alleys and the raised voices in courtyards, only all talking about how they'd escaped. Bath will survive . . . Bombing does not destroy towns. They get even more of their own character to compensate."

English Cathedrals are, most of them, larger than any other cathedrals in Europe, except St. Peter's. They are a memorial of the time when people referred to "the pious English" and when the square mile of the City of London had over one hundred churches. And to this day, the presence of the church, symbolised by the Cathedral, broods over most cathedral towns. From the distance, whether the town is in a valley or on a hill top, the Cathedral rides above the houses and draws the landscape round it, flat East Anglian pasture or rounded chalk downs of Wiltshire. When you are in the town itself, the Cathedral disappears, though its personality pervades the place in many little churches, some "low," some "high," some locked, some bombed, most hidden among shops and winding alleys. Gaitered archdeacons and frequent clergy of less distinctive dress, haunt the Cathedral café, the Cathedral bookshop, the Chauntrye tea shoppe, the Cloister antique shop. Then suddenly at the end of a street or through some monastic gateway to the Close you see the Cathedral soaring into the sky. At once it is bigger, more majestic, more richly textured than you would have believed possible. And in the silence of the Close, where ilex, lilac and copper beech hang over walled gardens of the Canons' houses and where gigantic elms rise from smooth stretches of emerald grass, the Cathedral is so vast and so old, so unbelievable a piece of engineering in the poise and counterpoise of local stone that you feel you must whisper, if you want to speak at all, even outside it.

Here in another country my mind goes to Salisbury, my favourite cathedral city. There is the usual wide market square of a county town, mellow brick houses and a quantity of inns, some small beer houses for thirsty drovers, some jazed-



THE PEACE FESTIVAL AT SALISBURY, 1856  
Lithograph by M. and N. Hanhart

up hostelryes for motorists ; there is St. Thomas's church, of pale grey stone among the red tiles and brick, with its slender fifteenth century interior : the main streets whose multiple stores have left fairly unharmed the old buildings above the shop fronts, the long grey wall of the Cathedral precincts, and then that huge, silent, tree-shadowed close, acres of retreating grass as a setting for the vertical lines of the great cathedral with its tremendous spire nearly as high as the distant downs.

And if the interior of Salisbury is now a little cold, stripped of its wall painting and ancient glass, I think of Winchester, that endless nave where screen and transept and aisle suggest, by branching roof and intersecting vaults, vista upon vista beyond to God himself. Or I remember an Evensong at Hereford, a remote Cathedral less visited than many, where I was one of a small congregation, listening to the contemplative service of Evensong which had been kept up through the Reformation and the centuries ; the well-trained choir from the choir school, the tenors and basses and altos from the town : the psalms : a Canon reading the lesson, appearing from the dark recess of a stall : the intoned prayers and the 'Amen' floating up to the vaulting : the sweet Victorian anthem in tune with Sir Gilbert Scott's pious restoration of the fabric. Or I am back at a Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, hearing Handel among the heavy Norman pillars of the Nave and glimpsing, beyond, that lace-like miracle of glass and stone, the Choir at

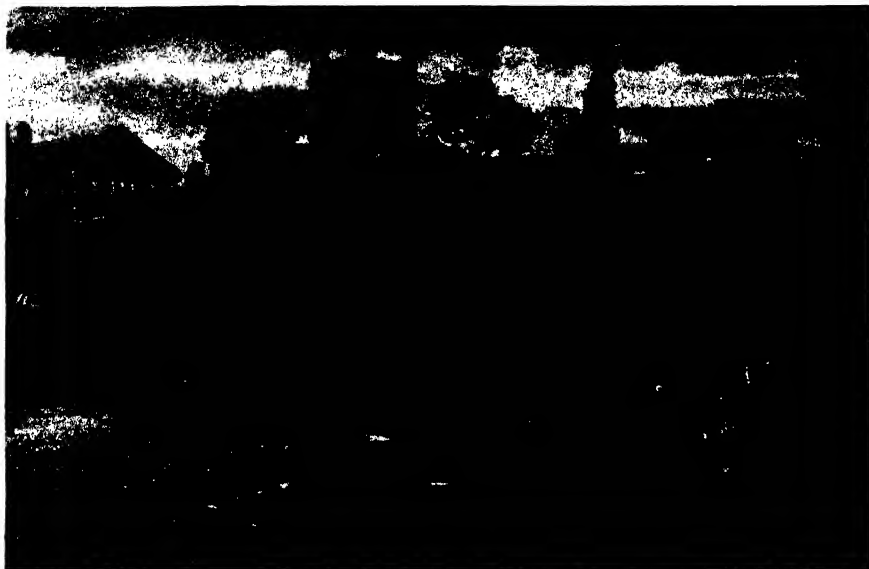




#### ELY CATHEDRAL

Engraving from J. M. W. Turner's *Picturesque Views of England and Wales*, 1838

Gloucester where England first bred the Perpendicular style, the last and, to me, most beautiful phase of Gothic. Or I am saying my last prayers in England, before leaving for Ireland, in the early light shining on pink sandstone in Chester Cathedral, a square and strong and Northern looking building. Or I am rowing on the river at Ely and glancing up at the Cathedral on the slope above me, the ingenious lantern at the intersection of nave transepts and choir, the stately towers at the west, the aisles and chapels bursting out from the masonry into rich churches of their own. Three other Cathedral memories remain: being shewn round Canterbury at midnight by the light of an electric torch on Norman capital and distant vault and finally there at my feet a circle of light on the spot where St. Thomas à Becket was murdered: standing in the whispering gallery of St. Paul's as the shadows grew down the empty nave on the night of one of the heaviest raids on the City when a time bomb fell into St. Paul's Churchyard and did not explode: a fine September evening in that first most sinister year of the War, when the Youth Fellowship of my home village was having its final fling, a day's outing by char-a-banc to Cheddar Gorge; the Bishop shewed us round the moated Palace at Wells and from the palace garden we looked across to the east end of the Cathedral where the late light cast long shadows on the golden Somerset stone. I remember thinking then that I must store in my mind every detail, the flowers in the palace garden, the fishponds, the sculptured proportions of



WYE BRIDGE AND CATHEDRAL, HEREFORD  
Water colour by Vincent Lines

that kind country cathedral, for here was the heart of England, and an unforgettable monument of Christendom.

However you see them, whether for a service, or for a moment in the close, or for a gaping, guide-conducted tour, the Cathedrals dwarf the towns and cities where they are. When you are out again in the streets, shops and war and factories and buses and trams are trivial and unimportant. In some places, the town has become industrialised and eaten its way almost to the Cathedral gates as at Chester, Gloucester, Durham and Worcester, or it has hardly grown at all as at Ely and Wells ; or it has become noisy and crowded, too narrow and old for all the traffic which has been allowed by a careless generation to pour into it, as at Chichester, York, Winchester, Salisbury and St. Albans : whatever has happened, the Cathedral still rules. Loud over the internal combustion engine sound its bells, even if, for the present, they only strike the hour.

And next to the Cathedral towns, come the University towns of Oxford and Cambridge, in my affection. Oxford, though it has a small Cathedral, comes first in the guide books, but second as a place of fine architecture. For Oxford is really three towns : at the heart of it is the University where the great Renaissance dome of the Radcliffe Library gathers round it neighbouring Gothic towers, where small gateways give on to large quadrangles, where Cotswold stone, flaked and ancient, goes purple in the rain and golden in the sunlight, where the



HOUSES AT OXFORD  
Water colour by George Pyne, c. 1800-1884

High Street curves up from weeping willows at Magdalen Bridge and traffic thunders past the fronts of colleges, where bells sound at every quarter with such divergence from such a variety of towers and steeples as almost to make it seem that bells are ringing all the time ; where wallflowers still grow on college walls as Newman saw them and dons in billowing gowns sweep under archways and bicycles abound. That is the University. Then there is the City, the place of Oxfordshire and Berkshire farmers and tradespeople, with a Castle, an Assize Court, two stations and a cattle market. Even without the University, it would be attractive enough like Wallingford or Abingdon or any other fair-sized country town. The third town is a modern industrial growth, with rows of modern villas, arcades of chain stores, elephantine cinemas and gleaming factories. It is some way off from its two old parents, but its people, its shops and its villas have encircled them and throttled their old throats.

For this reason Cambridge is now more beautiful than Oxford. It has been less industrialised. For me there is a personal affection for Oxford, but I can see that to the unbiased, the windy East Anglian town has a finer collection of buildings. The silver grey classic Senate House ; the romantic screen on King's Parade to King's College Chapel ; evening light in the chapel with the colours dying in that forest of Tudor stone and glass and the distant choir filing out of



KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, FROM THE BACKS, CAMBRIDGE  
Water colour by Edward Vulliamy

the candle light and high, high above us the complicated roof—not even Wordsworth's sonnet does justice to this most exquisite interior ; early spring on the 'backs' with weeping willows and the grey colleges, the little balustered bridges of stone over the river, and behind them the airy, fanciful Gothic of St. John's and over all one of those great, windy skies that Tennyson loved ; the market town and the diversity of college buildings, some silver stone, and some mellow brick : these all should make Cambridge not second but first in the next Baedeker.

Oxford and Cambridge stand somewhat apart, like the Cathedral towns. But how am I going to describe the three hundred and seventy quiet inland towns of England ? Three times now, I have tried to write this part of the book. First I wrote of the show towns—Stratford-on-Avon, Ludlow, Rye and Winchelsea, Burford : then it seemed that I had left out those I ought to mention, more alive than the show places because less self-conscious and less well-known. Then I tried to mention all the small towns, however briefly, tried to fit into a few words the wind-swept, fortress-like North, brick and flint East Anglian towns, stony Cotswold places huddled among the sheep hills, rich West Country orchard towns, modest Midland boroughs—but the result was too condensed. I am at a loss. English country towns are all different : their pattern and their history is on the surface similar, but below it is full of individual character. Each has its now dis-

rupting social scale of Big House, rector, solicitor, Mayor, shopkeeper, worker : each has its High Street or Market Square where once a week or once a month the shops are open to a late hour, the little inns are full and cattle, carts and cars block the roads because it is market day : each is a capital in itself to neighbouring farms and villages. But the look of them, the associations, the buildings, the very materials from which the towns have got their texture through the centuries is different. In the tiny county of Rutland, Uppingham, on a hill, is a grey stone town of 17th and 18th century houses largely of one long main street : only a few miles away Oakham in the valley, the county town, is built mostly of plaster and brick, with several streets converging because, I suppose, in the great period of domestic building between one and two hundred years ago, stone was not so near Oakham as it was near Uppingham. I have found it useless to attempt anything but a selection of towns. And let it not be thought that these towns are 'typical' : no English town is 'typical.' I have merely chosen small towns from different sorts of country. And even for different sorts of country I must make a qualification. There is no 'typical' English country. If you live in England you can tell by the colour, the contour, the people, the shapes of fields and churches and cottages whether you are in Devon or Somerset, in Lancashire or Cheshire. The counties are almost like separate countries, they differ so much in appearance : even parts of counties differ. The eight small towns, shortly noticed here, are not like all those near them ; they have some resemblance to those in their neighbourhood, but they are not, in appearance, like one another.

Alnwick is a Northumberland fortress. It seems to have been built to resist the wind and the Scots ; walls are thick ; windows are small : stone and the winding river Aln guard you. This is a Celtic place : you would think it had as unwillingly submitted to Rome after the Synod of Whitby as submitted to the Crown after the Act of Uniformity. It is in a county of castles and few villages, except coal towns ; the town does not fade gently into the country, as towns do in the softer south of England : you get the feeling you have come into a friendly enclosure after a long journey over bare hills, guided by the beacon turret of St. Michael's church. Once there were four gateways to the town, but now only



SOUTH WEST PROSPECT OF SHREWSBURY  
Coloured engraving by S. & N. Buck, 1732



BRIDGNORTH FROM KNOWL SANDS  
Coloured lithograph by Newman and Sons, c. 1842

one remains and the eighteenth century memorial of another. The Castle (Duke of Northumberland), still dominates the place, with a view down the Aln valley from its terraces and with a series of sumptuous rooms, some re-decorated when it was safe to lay out a park along the banks of the Aln and cultivated to adorn with Renaissance detail a mediaeval stronghold. From the town, a little more than a century ago, were issued beautiful little books for children illustrated with woodcuts in the manner of Bewick.

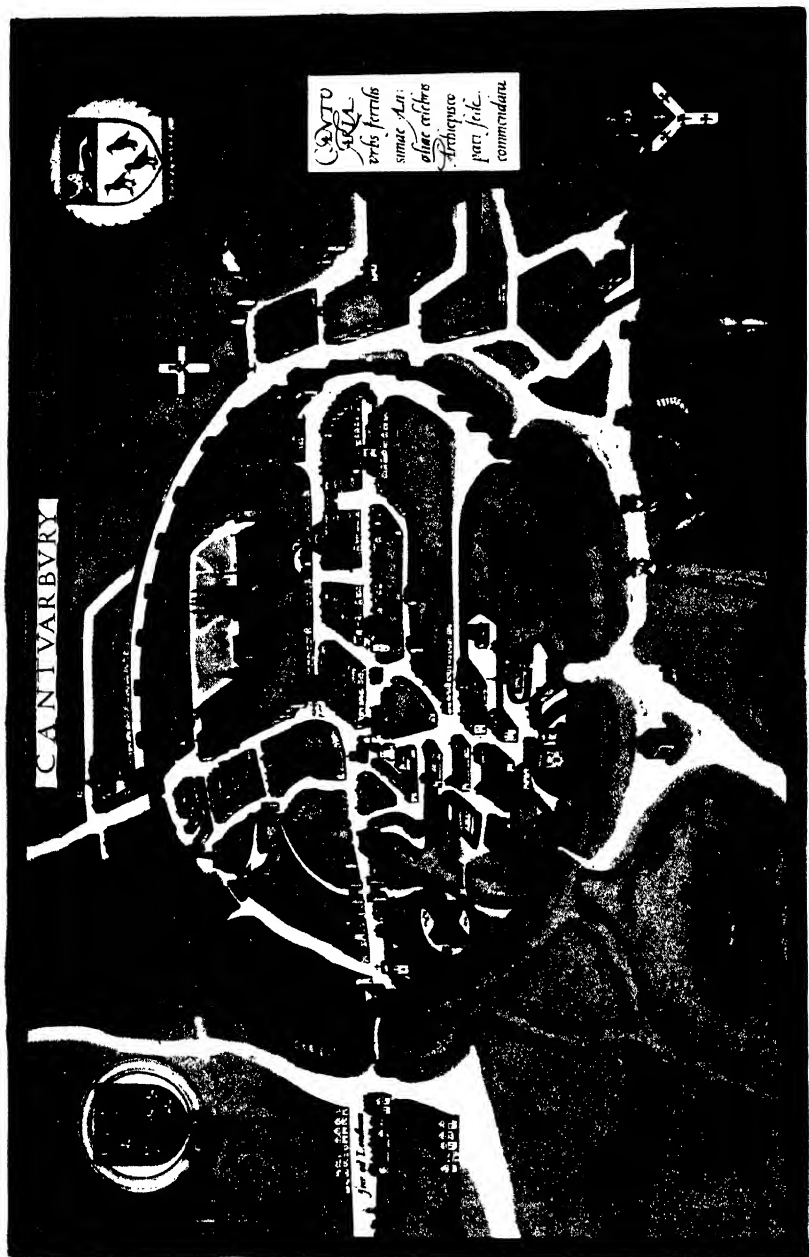
It was my delight in the varied worship in the Church of England that first brought me to Thaxted in Essex. For who had not heard of the late Conrad Noel, the Vicar who was called a Christian Communist and who hung the Red Flag in his church? Thaxted is as much a town as a large village, as are many of those half-towns, half-villages of East Anglia. Small hills, many elms, red tiled farms with cream or white plaster walls, little streams by which grow cricket-bat willows, and then the high stone spire of Thaxted church. Cottages and sedate brick houses form a broad street ending in a half timber hall on wooden stilts: a steep hill behind this and there is the huge fifteenth century church and behind it, the Georgian brick vicarage and a little cottage street sailing out into the country beyond. In the church sun streamed through great clear glass windows cutting across the blue waves of incense and the hanging banners of the chancel, in this white and living church: and with that renewed visual perception that comes after a church service when you are out in the world again, I saw, and have kept

in my memory ever since, those prevailing summer colours of an East Anglian town—blue-black flint and grey limestone, orange-red tiles, dark green box hedges, dark red brick, and, gently spreading away below me, the pale-green elmy undulations of North Essex.

In Shropshire, the Severn winds down a valley which is almost a gorge: deciduous woodland decorates its banks and here and there is a grassy clearing of parkland to reveal a country house, and round a bend is Bridgnorth, on a cliff above the rapid river. Of course there was a castle on such a site as this on the borders of Wales, but it is now an irregular fragment leaning over at a ridiculous angle and mocked by a municipal public garden around the masonry. Beneath on the Severn bank is the low town, brick houses with a hint of fishing about them and one hundred and eighty feet above is the High town with a twisting hill or a romantic cliff railway as the alternative ascent. Up here in the air, are two churches, one a classic design by Telford the great engineer and the other mediæval. The main street of the High town is a mixture of inns, shops, black and white houses and pinkish brick, with a blacker and whiter Town Hall at one end of it. Ludlow, in the same county, is lovelier, it is probably the loveliest town in England with its hill of Georgian houses ascending from the river Teme to the great tower of the cross-shaped church, rising behind a classic market building. But Bridgnorth, especially if you come up by the little cliff railway, seems more rarified and remote, an Elizabethan dream approached by lift from the present century.

When I thought of the stone towns of middle England, a certain perverseness came over me, I would describe Highworth in North Wilts which no one visits except to see relations and which has hardly an ugly building in it, I would cut out the Cotswolds and describe Oundle in Northampton or Rockingham or Bloxham, all in districts which are like the Cotswolds without their 'artiness.' But all the time the view of Burford from the top of its hill, haunted me. Burford, whose leaded windows look first on an avenue of pollarded limes and then across at one another as the hill descends: Burford, the 'gem of the Cotswolds,' 'the picturesque,' 'the quaint,' 'the Mecca of workers with brush and pencil.' After all, it is only in the last fifty years that Burford has been 'discovered' and the discovery has preserved much of it from the speculator and the improver. It is a town of golden stone in the green-grey Cotswolds; a steep hill of mossy, stone-roofed houses descending to the river Windrush; a churchyard of baroque altar tombs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a great wool church of the last days of Christendom; a town of vistas through Tudor openings on to stone hedges overrun with stone crop and yellow wallflower: no one who has leant on the bridge and looked down the little valley of the Windrush and up at the climbing stone and the great trees around the Priory can forget the inland peace of such a town.

Chalk country breeds a colour of its own. Old red brick takes on a warmer glow, limestone seems silver white, grass varies from gold to green on the swelling downs and beeches and elms have an eighteenth century look as though painted



PLAN OF CANTERBURY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY  
Published by Braun & Hogenburg, c. 1580

By courtesy of F. R. Meaynard, London





VIEW OF YORK, 1756  
Drawn by N. Drake and engraved by C. Grignion

*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery, London*

in by Gainsborough for a foreground or as distant globes of colour in an aquatint. So Blandford, seen from the hill on the road from Wiltshire into Dorset, glories in its brickwork, and chimney stacks are a landscape to themselves. Enter the town by back lanes to see the chimneys and the back gardens and soon you are out of the country into the wide Market place. This indeed is a handsome area. Blandford was burnt to the ground on June 4th, 1731, and two brothers named Bastard were employed in the re-building. They designed that handsome classic church of stone and the fountain before it, but they threw the shining ashlar of their church into contrast by building the larger houses in brick—I think I trace their hand in the sumptuous Crown Inn down by the River Stour and overlooking the beech-shaded park of Bryanston, and in one or two merchant's houses in the town. Blandford still looks like a scene in one of Wheatley's engravings, and perhaps its classic comeliness gave Alfred Stevens, who was born here, his taste for Renaissance. But it is an odd place to find the grave of Sam Cowell, the Cockney Victorian song writer and supposed author of 'The Ratcatcher's Daughter.'

In the West Country, in South Devon, the steep combes and luxuriant, fuchsia hedges remind the Irishman of Kerry, purple flowers of buddleia hang on walls, palms sprout among the chicken runs of farmhouse gardens and high-banked lanes are luscious rockeries where gaps give a view of red earth and ash and oak and hazel hang over lanes. Maybe it is hallucination, but flowers and leaves in South Devon seem to grow larger than elsewhere in England. Towns are come on suddenly and I cannot do better than leave you to the description of one of them by William Allingham, the Irish poet, for the town has not much changed since he visited it about sixty years ago :

'It was nightfall when I quitted the train at Totnes station, and walked off alone along a dark bit of road under the stars, to enter a strange town,—a special delight ; turned a corner, into the long, narrow, roughly-paved High Street ; downhill, to the poetic sign of The Seven Stars, a large, old-fashioned hostel, with garden to the river ; then, after choosing bedroom, out again for the never-to-be-omitted-when-possible immediate and rapid survey, by any sort of light, of the place not seen before since I was born.

Up-hill goes the steep, narrow street, crossed, half way up, by a deep arch bearing a house ; then the houses on each side jut on the side path supported on stumpy stone pillars ; then I zig-zag to the left, still upwards, and by and by come to the last house, and the last lamp, throwing its gleam on the hedgerows and trees of a solitary country road. This last house was an old and sizable one, with mullioned windows, one of which is lighted, and on the blind falls a shadow from within of a woman sewing. The slight and placid movements of this figure, at once so shadowy and so real, so close at hand and so remote, are suggestive of rural contentment, a life of security and quietude. Yet how different from this the facts may be !

Next morning I mounted to the castle-keep of Judael de Totnais, through a wildly-tangled shrubbery, and from the mouldered battlements looked over Totnes's gray slate roofs and gables, and the silvery Dart winding amongst wooded hills. Opposite stood the tall, square, red sandstone tower of the old church, buttressed to the top, and with

a secondary round turret running up from ground to sky near the centre of its north face, an unusual and picturesque feature. Then hied I to the churchyard, and beside it, in a rough back lane, saw an old low building, with an old low porch. The old key was in the old, iron-guarded door, and I entered, without question, the old Guildhall of the old town. Over the bench hung a board painted with the arms of Edward VI, supported by Lion and wyvern, 'Anno Domini 1553,' with motto, 'Du et mond Droyit.' The latticed windows looked into an orchard whose apples almost touched the panes. It was a little hall with a little dark gallery at one end, for the mediaeval public, and under this, the barred loopholes for the mediaeval prisoners to peep through.'

Allingham is a little free with his use of 'mediaeval': more probably the court tried the early escapades at home of Elizabeth's Devon seamen!

## PORTS

THE sea breeds a special architecture in England. All the old ports have rows of bow-windowed houses, generally Georgian, near the harbour or on heights overlooking the sea. To these merchant seamen retire and spend their last days looking out through a telescope at the water. Brass front door knockers are highly polished, thresholds are scrubbed, reminders of clean decks and cabins, ships in bottles are suspended in parlours. Names like Nelson, William IV., Collingwood, Drake, Royal, Clarence, Arethusa, are commemorated by streets, columns, halls, public houses, hotels, victualling yards, docks. Nonconformist chapels abound and the more extreme forms of evangelicalism are to be found in churches of the Establishment. There are plenty of lodging houses for sailors and numerous missions to seamen, small front gardens have borders of cockle-shells and glittering lumps of quartz and here and there in a back garden or a yard you may find the huge wooden figurehead of a ship; there is a smell of tar, rope and salt in the air and weather vanes and flags among the houses tell everyone where the wind is blowing. These characteristics are common in English ports whatever their size. My mind reverts to Padstow, a tiny sea port on the estuary of the Camel in Cornwall—the feathery slate of old buildings round the quays, the narrow streets of slate houses climbing up to the church and the windy hills above, the marine store, the slate hung fronts of houses, the modest customs office, the black tarred warehouse, the smell of harbour mud at low tide and of salt and sea when dinghies are stirred on incoming water; the little streets where motor cars seem so unimportant after boats.

Nor is Liverpool, with all its extent of two-storey streets and polychrome hospitals and polytechnics, unattractive. Though St. George's Hall, that superbly proportioned example of the Greek period, is the finest public building in England, though the Walker Art Gallery has such a grand collection of Pre-Raphaelites, though the Cathedral looks so imposing at a distance (disappointing and unmysterious within), though the breezy Georgian terraces around the Cathedral and the Classic and restored Gothic churches in the city are among the best of their kind, still the soul of the place is around the six miles of docks. Here lead most



ST. MAWES, CORNWALL  
Oil painting by P. H. Jowett

of the roads to cobbled straight streets thundering with carts and lorries, flanked on the water side by enormous walls and guarded gateways, on the land side by bars, houses, shops and lodgings. The best way to see the docks is to take the overhead electric railway ; Herculaneum, Brunswick, Coburg, Trafalgar, Queen's, Albert, Princess, Waterloo, Clarence, Collingwood, Nelson, Wellington, Huskisson, Canada, Alexandra,—the names indicate the dates. Over the fogs and the levels of the Mersey, the cranes, the towers, the office blocks of Liverpool rise up, the most awe-inspiring port in England. The port of London may be larger, but Liverpool exists because it is a seaport town and as such it is a more attractive port than London.

Yet, to me, the best port of all is Bristol. There is no city in England with so much character. It keeps itself to itself. To Bristolians the Great Western Railway, which was inspired and largely financed by Bristol, is not a line for taking Bristolians to London, but for taking Londoners to Bristol. And, lest loyalty to Bristol should waver, there is on Paddington Station an advertisement of a Society of Bristolians in London. It is a town associated with rich men in the tobacco, wine and chocolate trades. Bristol is the capital of another

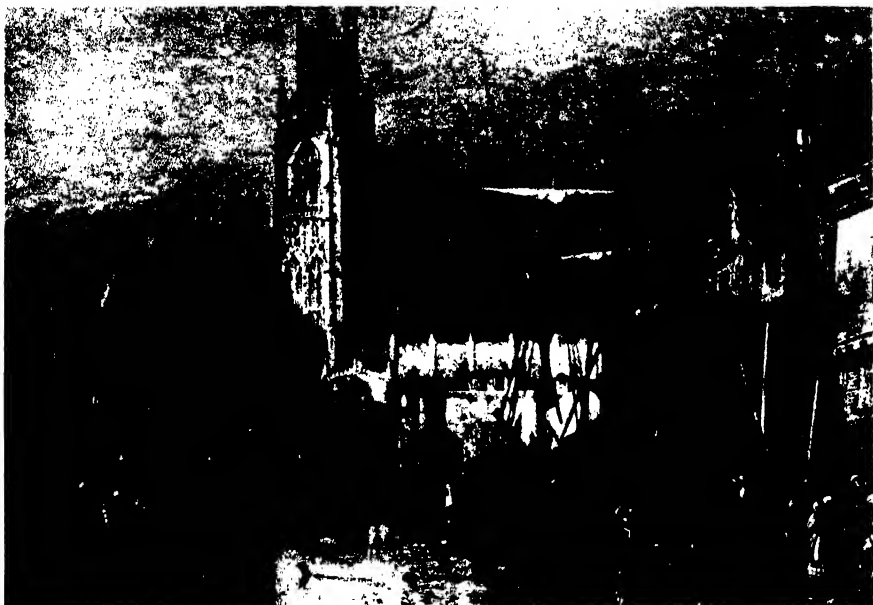


THE SEMAPHORE, PORTSMOUTH  
19th century engraving

kingdom, the West of England. From Bristol many of the social and religious movements of England have first received impetus. To this day a sturdy non-conformity governs the city—or rather the two cities.

One city is the port on the Avon, with narrow streets, old churches, half timber houses. It has a wooden eighteenth century theatre untouched since those days, with a pit where the stalls are in a modern auditorium. This was the port from which many ships sailed in Elizabeth's reign, when the masts of shipping stood up among the lace-like towers of churches, where it was still possible on a Sunday night before the war, when the bells were ringing for Evensong, to picture quaysides full of Elizabethan sailors. They seem to have left the air of the Spanish main, for in Bristol there are many wine vaults and the people drink wine at bars as they drink beer in other cities. My dear old friend, Canon W. L. Bowles of Bremhill and Salisbury, who died in 1850, has left a picture of Bristol in his poem *Banwell Hill* (1829):

how proud,  
With all her spires and fanes, and volumed smoke,  
Trailing in columns to the midday sun,  
Black, or pale blue, above the cloudy haze,  
And the great stir of commerce, and the noise  
Of passing and repassing wains, and cars,



# BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Engraving from J. M. W. Turner's *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*, 1838

And sledges, grating in their underpath,  
 And trade's deep murmur, and a street of masts  
 And pennants from all nations of the earth,  
 Streaming below the houses, piled aloft,  
 Hill above hill ; and every road below  
 Gloomy with troops of coal nymphs, seated high  
 On their rough pads, in dingy dust serene :—  
 How proudly, amid sights and sounds like these,  
 Bristol, through all whose smoke, dark and aloof,  
 Stands Redcliff's solemn fane,—how proudly girt  
 With villages, and Clifton's airy rocks,  
 Bristol, the mistress of the Severn sea—  
 Bristol, amid her merchant-palaces,  
 That ancient city sits !

The eighteenth century stone houses climb up steep hills past the beautiful and little-known Cathedral to the second city, Clifton, another Bath, a late Georgian spa on the heights of the Avon Gorge. The Gorge is crossed by Brunel's Suspension Bridge, which is a delicate balanced structure, like an insect of enormous size pausing astride the rocks and trees. And beyond the Spa and the crowded port, stretch miles of solid Victorian houses built of a pinkish sandstone, where at the end of the road there is always a church, generally Evangelical. Bristol has



AN EAST COAST FISH WHARF  
Drawing by F. C. Jones

been bombed ; much lace-like carved stone of those Somerset towers and arcades has been smashed, the delicate plasterwork (some of the best in Europe) in Georgian houses has gone for ever : yet Bristol seems much the same as when I last saw it. The strong character is not destroyed nor have all its best buildings and its narrow steep alleyways disappeared. Bristol will never die.

So far all the ports I have described face west. Those which face south to France are, when they are of any size, on a comparatively low coast line. None has a finer setting than the three towns—Devonport, Stonehouse and Plymouth—looking over the sound to leafy Mt. Edgcombe and the Cornish cliffs beyond.

None on the South coast had finer streets than these towns where marble pavements reflected, in the wet, nautical Georgian terraces and the whole colour of the town was the pale blue-gray of the local stone. Portsmouth, particularly the more ancient part close to the sea, had even more seventeenth century houses crowded near the water front ; at Southsea naval officers retired and their daughters became engaged to young lieutenants at many a Southsea dance : and bars sold much pink gin.

The East coast ports are Dutch. Mellow brick houses have stepped battlements, the prevailing colours are from sand and brick. The old town of Harwich is the best of them, with its narrow streets on the peninsula between the Orwell and the Stour. In Lincolnshire, Boston might be a Dutch town out of which,

unaccountably rises an enormous mediaeval church tower, Boston Stump, seen for miles across the fens and the sea.

Higher up in Yorkshire the moors jut into the sea and high cliffs take the place of sandy flats. Fishing villages have almost a Cornish look. Whitby lies where the river Esk forms a valley in the lias. The ruined Abbey looked down on the grey, narrow-streeted town and across the valley to a respectable collection of red-brick summer residences of the present century. Just below the Abbey stands the parish church, on a cliff. It is the least spoiled seaside church in the country. Dormer windows project from the roof, ancient pointed windows were fitted with wooden frames in the eighteenth century and they diversify lichen-covered walls. Within, is a forest of painted box pews, galleries stretch in all directions, even across the chancel screen. And the pews are lined inside with baize, some green, some blue, some pink. There seems never to have been enough room for the people of Whitby to hear a good sermon or to thank God for a good season. With so much joinery, you feel you are in the wooden hold of a ship.



INTERIOR OF WHITBY CHURCH  
Water colour by Kenneth Rowntree



## INDUSTRIAL TOWNS

**I**NDUSTRIAL towns are another subject. They should not be included in this book, which deals largely with the look of things—buildings first and people second. Except to connoisseurs of architecture, the industrial towns of England are more interesting for their people than for the buildings. From Mrs. Gaskell to D. H. Lawrence, from George Gissing to Arnold Bennett, the life of the industrial towns has been described intimately and well. And since the larger proportion of our population is industrial, in the days of realistic writing that followed the last war, much English literature was about industrial towns. I could not, in a few paragraphs, describe the varieties of accent, habit and manners of the industrial districts of England whether Birmingham, Staffordshire, Durham, Cheshire or Lancashire. There is an individualism about industrial towns as great as that of country towns, but it is more a difference of population from population, than style of building from style of building.

The tram comes clicking through the suburbs, past the grand new Corporation building estate with its municipal gardens, big new school, shining brick church, wide grass and tree-planted verges. The road narrows somewhat as the larger villas begin, residences of former mayors, of managers and executives—all built before the last war. Each house has a garden and a carriage drive and over conifers and laurels may be seen the handsome residence, in the neo-Queen Anne, neo-Tudor or neo-Gothic style. From the top of the tram you look down on devotedly tended gardens, bright with begonias, to the sheltered tennis court and rustic summer-house. A bold Nonconformist church terminates an avenue and the tram enters the district of the older and still larger villas built, in the last century when the place was beginning to grow, for managers, mayors and aldermen. They are well proportioned buildings—the death knell of the old architectural traditions—in the Italian, Swiss or Grecian styles, rendered with stucco outside. But these are too big now for the sort of people who want to live as near to the town as this (it is nearly every Englishman's ambition to have enough money to live in the country), so the houses have been turned into flats and institutions and their gardens have the impersonal look that comes from corporate responsibility. Around some, the large garden has been built upon by speculators. And now the road is narrower still and the top of the tram is almost above the level of bedroom windows. We are on the hill above the valley wherein lies the centre of the town. The tram creaks down the curve, the little streets of red brick houses, climb up the hills all round; the vista of countless chimney pots is broken by a narrow Victorian spire. Terrace follows terrace in glazed brick, front doors by the hundred and then an arcade of little shops. A large Baptist Church, a larger Congregational Church, and larger still a Methodist Church: notices of mid-week services, a used-looking church hall, pale green and brown glass in squares in the windows. The valley closes in on us, the river is crossed, black and flanked with factories, the great office buildings rise, whirling

with terra-cotta decoration, the chain stores assert themselves with distinctive shop fronts, the huge emporium of the place glides by. Tram lines converge, public statues abound ; buildings which might be termed the cathedrals of Baptists, Methodists, Unitarians, etc., prepare the way for a gigantic Town Hall built in the 'seventies or 'eighties. On another side of the square is the railway station and hotel in Early French Renaissance style. And beside the town hall is the great Library and Art Gallery (often with a large collection of pre-Raphaelites who were very popular with manufacturers, admirers of craftsmanship they could understand). These last buildings were probably the gift of a family since ennobled and living in a country house remote from the town which gave them the money to buy their social position. The high principled founder of the family fortune endowed his town with all that he missed in youth—the pictures, books, and a polytechnic—out of a mixture of affection for and conscience towards his native place.

Do not judge these industrial towns by their faces : they are the most alive places in England ; they are more interesting than the little dead country towns which we so like to look at : think of Manchester and Birmingham with their concerts, theatres, parks, art galleries, cathedrals : notice the fine public buildings and Church of England churches of Leeds and Sheffield : the Town Hall at Huddersfield : the public buildings of Preston and Bradford. To someone who is not interested in people and social questions, the sight of the potteries at night or Bradford at night or of Manchester in one of its crimson smoky sunsets, is a sight never to be forgotten for beauty. To someone who likes people as well as buildings, the industrial towns are the hope and the life of England.



THE OLD EXCHANGE AND MARKET STREET, MANCHESTER  
Water colour by David Cox, 1783-1859

## SPAS AND WATERING PLACES

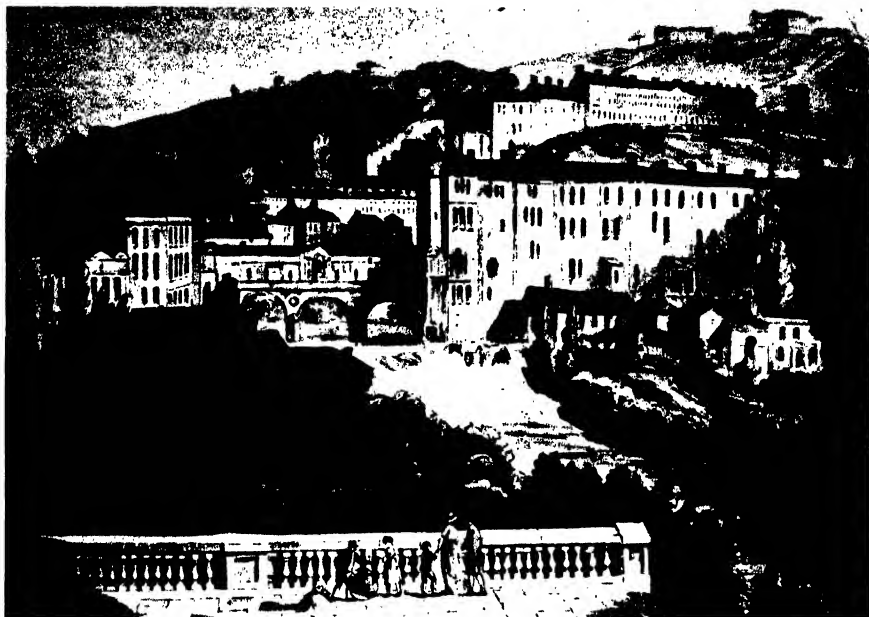
THE great ages of town building in England were the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There was a sense of planning, not of a single house, as there is to-day, and as there was before the eighteenth century, but of whole streets and towns. When the thermal water of Bath became popular in the eighteenth century, that small abbey town around the remains of a Roman Bath, spread stone terraces along the valley and hill. John Wood and his son were local architects and between them and their successor, Baldwin, they designed streets and crescents, Pump Room, Assembly Rooms, churches and chapels—all in a correct Palladian style, laid out to command views and vistas. Nowhere in Europe is there a more complete eighteenth century town than at Bath. The Nazi bombing has not destroyed its character, only obliterated for the time some of its details.

Bath is a stone town throughout. It climbs the North bank of the Avon. On a fine evening before the war you could watch the light on the great sweeps of Royal Crescent shadowy with attached columns; then the lights would come out in the S-shaped Lansdowne Crescent high on a hill, and in the blue valley would twinkle terraces and crescents of light as more lamps started up; you could hear the sheep grazing the grass before the Royal Crescent; you could lean on wrought iron railings and then walk down by narrow high walled alleys into the town and people the streets with sedan chairs and the main roads with coaches as the sun sank behind the high smooth hills.

Bath was mostly built between 1760 and 1810. It set a fashion for spas. Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, is the next most beautiful, a stuccoed town in the Regency manner, with lime and chestnut shaded pavements, sunny squares, classic terraces with delicate ironwork on verandahs and basement railings, single villas, now Swiss, now Gothic, now classic, and crescents and avenues, all in cheerful yellow stucco or golden Cotswold stone, shaded by trees and lightened with flowering shrubs. Papworth and Jeppard and Underwood were the chief architects of Cheltenham in the beginning of the last century. Here army and professional people retire to drink the chalybeate waters and frequent the circulating libraries.

Leamington, Warwick, is a similar town in stucco, slightly later and therefore less classic and more Gothic and Swiss in its plaster façades than Cheltenham but hardly less beautiful. There are large inland spas at Droitwich, Malvern, Harrogate and Tunbridge Wells, Woodhall and Buxton. But none of them have so much architectural merit as Bath, Cheltenham and Leamington. Clifton, which has ceased to be a spa, retains its early nineteenth century architecture.

After the visit of George III to Weymouth in the eighteenth century, watering places sprang up on the coast, and they must not be confused with the sea ports, where the sea is chastened by harbour bars and docks. In watering places, everything is a preparation for playing on the edge of the sea and for looking at it. Houses are more expensive, the better their view of the restless water. Little



VIEW OF BATH  
Coloured aquatint by J. C. Nattes, 1806

shrimping nets and wooden spades are for sale outside every stationer, bathing dresses dry on window sills, bathing machines diversify the beach, the pier, wriggling with whited ironwork, steps on slender iron legs into the waves.

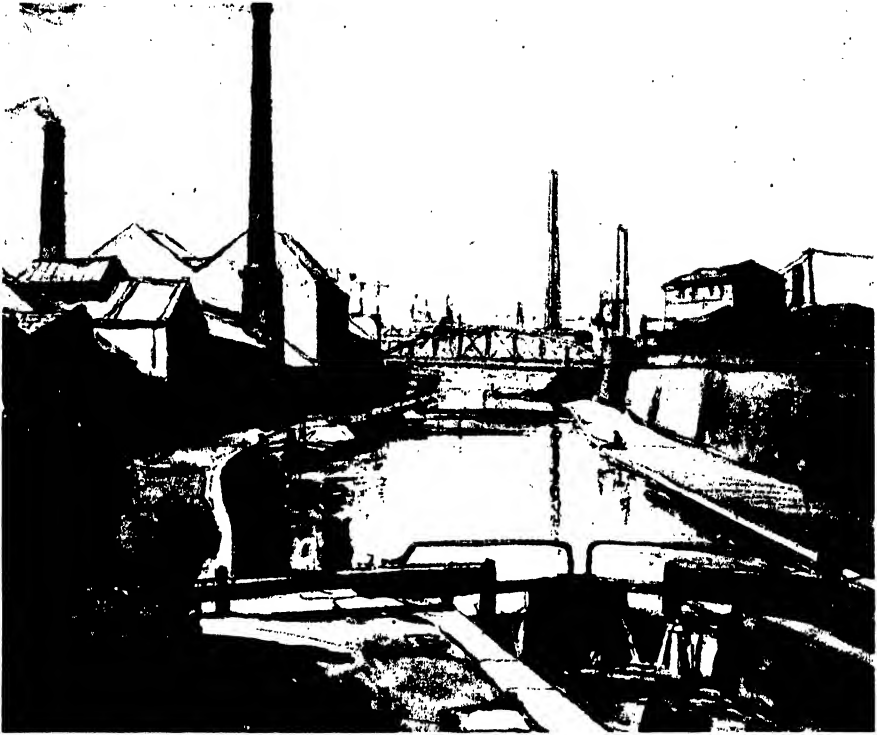
Who can forget Brighton, the miles of stucco terraces, squares and crescents facing the English channel? On a silvery day the reflection of the sea on to white and yellow stone rising above wind-slashed veronica and tamarisk, lightens the heart and lifts up the rheumatic from his bath chair. Behind the terraces of Brighton are the "lanes" of a fishing town and, in the centre of the place, George IV's sumptuous Oriental Pavilion rears light domes and minarets of plaster. Less spoiled and smaller than Brighton are St. Leonard's, Dover, Ramsgate and Margate built in the same spacious late-Georgian time. On the North coast are Tynemouth, Scarborough and Cromer in the same style. In the West Country, Weymouth, Lyme Regis, Torquay, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Sidmouth—each watering place reflecting the character of its county.

After watering places come seaside places; which are of a later age, less planned, less beautiful than the Georgian and early Victorian watering places, built in an age when detached houses were popular and the notion was current that an Englishman's home was his castle, even if it was only a windy bungalow hired for the summer months. Sometimes these seaside resorts grew round a decayed fishing port where there was a beach or where a speculator had built one handsome terrace as

for a watering place which never caught on or where the subsoil was recommended by the medical profession, or the sands were wide. The chief are Bournemouth, Newquay, Skegness, Eastbourne, Weston-super-Mare, Frinton, Blackpool, Bridlington. Expensive hotels and even more expensive houses face the sea and the front, with sea shrubs in the garden, bronzed people eating ices in deck chairs, slot machines clicking and Edwardian kiosks selling rock and local views. Behind the houses on the sea front run roads at right angles where the lodgings are slightly cheaper. These roads lead to the shopping street, running parallel with the sea front off which are places of worship for every variety of churchmanship and sect ; behind them are the cheapest lodgings of all. On the inland edge of the town is a park for those permanent residents who have to live in the town all the winter when the wind makes the seafront impossible. Villas of all colours and styles edge the skyline : they make a London suburb by the sea, but a suburb with exquisite country within walking distance.



THE BOAT LANDING AND PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL,  
SHOWING THE GREAT WHEEL  
Lithograph from *An Album of Blackpool Views*



LEEDS AND LIVERPOOL CANAL  
Water colour by E. Barran

### HOW TOWNS GREW AND HOW THEY WILL GROW

What the quarries have done for the colour of English towns, transport has done for their plan and shape. Many may be said to have stayed put, fishing towns round a natural harbour, ports on a navigable river, strips of houses by coal mines or around factories whose existence depends on their proximity to coal or upon some product of the earth on which they stand. These towns, though many of them are large and little visited by the uncommercial, can never move or expand far outwards or wane—except that their industry cease to be essential—because the source from which their inhabitants derive their existence is immovable. Such towns do not expand in the way most English towns expand.

The average inland English town owes its importance to the transport which reaches it. When roads were shocking, and cattle were driven along hill tops: when valley people knew nothing of those who lived in the next valley: when as Hardy noticed fifty years ago, autumn thistledown and butterflies flew from the

meadows at one end of High Street to the cornfield at the other without noticing that the country town between was not a field, so closely identified was it with country life—England was pitted with small towns, the most convenient centres for a number of villages. And these were large or small according to the number of their surrounding farms. Maybe there were other reasons for a town's existence—a prosperous religious establishment, a position at a ford, or bridge, or in a sheltered valley. But it is noticeable to-day that the old towns of agricultural England are approached by many little lanes. When the town has grown, these little lanes have become the streets of small suburbs. These devious ways were for the convenience of farm carts and drovers. The town dwellers themselves and the carters and drovers, once they had reached the market place, had no further need of a wheeled vehicle during the day. So houses are islanded among passages, paths for walkers only, leading to church and green, the two most used places in early days.

Until roads improved, towns remained very much the same in size, only increasing or decreasing with the birthrate and another county was almost another country.

By the eighteenth century coaching had opened up one county to another. Though the repairs of roads was still chargeable to parishes, the main coaching roads of England brought additional prosperity to the towns and turnpike fees kept the roads in repair. Inns were large as Town Halls, with spreading stables behind. Fortunate was the town which was situated at a convenient coaching stage on the road to Scotland or Bath or Weymouth or the Midlands or the West : then rose the handsome houses with balconies on the first floor windows to watch the elegant vehicles rattle past. Coloured prints of such scenes (generally fakes) hang in the halls and lounges of most English hotels.

A country town in those days became accessible and many an owner of a country house would buy or rent a mansion in the country town and many an apothecary, lawyer and merchant would build a town house, out of the money made from all the county folk coming to the country town for the season.

Coaching roads and the coaches caused the people of the richer sort to live in country towns for the season. By the end of the eighteenth century the canals brought the bricks for whole terraces of new houses. Meanwhile the centre of the town remained the market square ; there was the big hotel and there came farm carts from the villages to market and the droves of cattle as they always had



LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE AND TRAIN  
Coloured aquatint after S. Bourne, 1825



LACE MANUFACTORY, TIVERTON  
19th century engraving

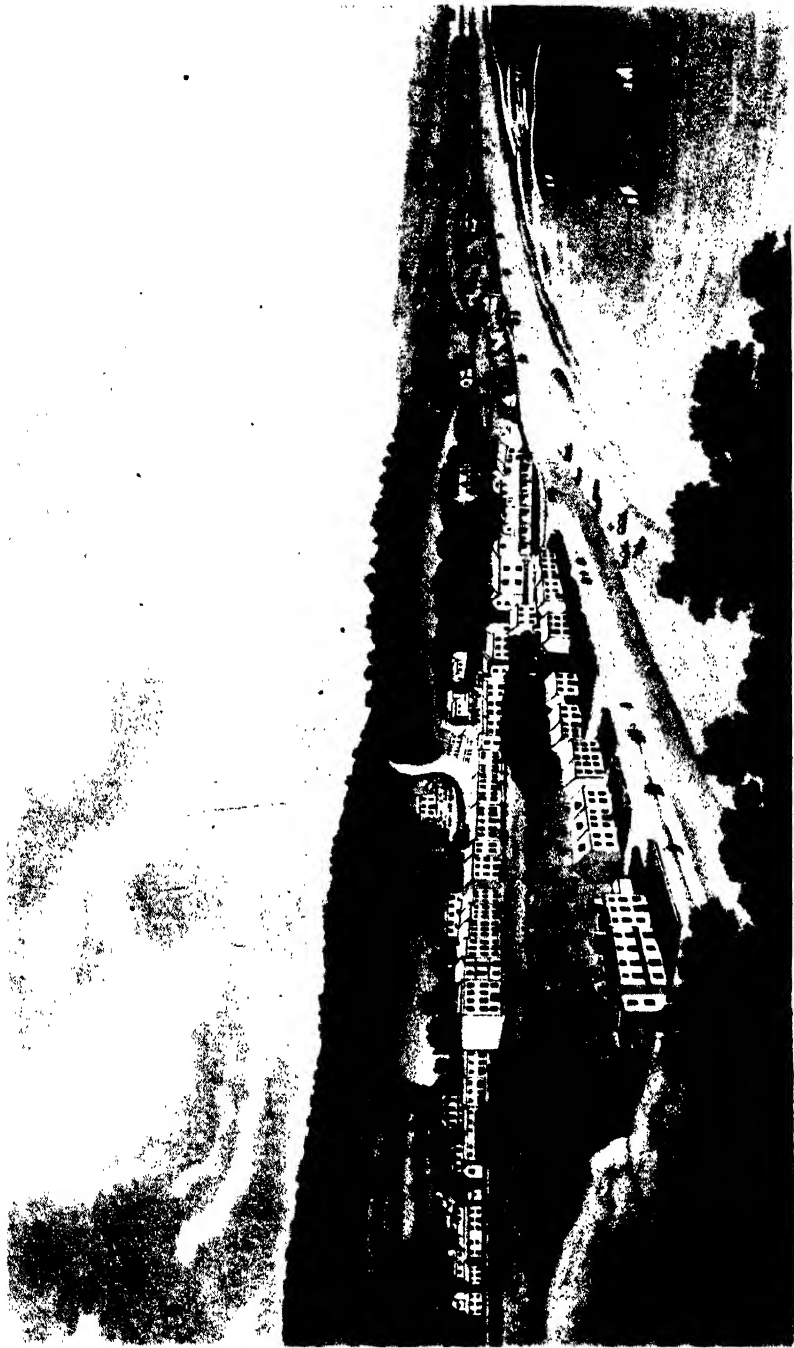
come. Land value in the centre of the town went up, so the plan remained the same.

The great change came with the railways. Thereafter the centre of business shifted to the neighbourhood of the railway station. The market square became less important than the goods yard. The old inn decayed and the smart new railway hotel with its gas light and billiards saloon drew the commercials and the Victorian business men. Clumps of houses gathered round the railway and if the size of the town demanded it, a suburban station was built a mile or two away and around this arose respectable residences for the semi-prosperous. Some towns, especially old country towns whose mayor and council preferred the horse to the steam engine, refused to co-operate with the railways. When they learned the line was coming, they refused to let it near the town: they foresaw the decay of the market square where their capital was invested, where they had met in the smell of straw and livestock for generations. So a station was built some miles from the town and the town itself decayed because the townsmen were unwilling to use the transport which would bring them prosperity. Thus it is you will find all over England branch lines built at a later date than the main line, going to old country towns, sad little tracks of single line winding through meadowland and valley to an imposing but nearly deserted terminus. Sometimes it happened that the railways, once their position was secure, refused to go out of



their way to bring the line to a small town. Sometimes the citizens themselves, in remorse, constructed a line of their own. The railway increased the size of some towns. Elsewhere it created new ones—Crewe, Swindon, Wolverton and Redhill. But the limitation of the railway was the places where it could stop. The more trains stopped at a town the greater became its commercial importance. Any town with a frequent service of trains became densely populated. We are inclined to blame the Victorians for the planlessness of industrial towns, for thin strips of two storey streets, that line either side of the railway line. But until trams and bicycles came into existence it was not practicable for people working in a factory to live on the outskirts of a mid-Victorian industrial town.

The density created at certain places by the railways has been thinned out by the motor car. For whereas a goods train and a passenger train has a prescribed stopping place on the line, lorries or private cars can stop anywhere along a road. They can start at any time and stop at any place. There is no trouble with waiting at junctions, with changing from one line to another. The motor lorry, by providing a cheap, rapid method of transport altered the plan of most of the English towns. Light industry, that is to say industry which is not confined to a certain district, has moved from the congested towns of the North of England and the Midlands, to main roads outside London and the big ports, or to the outskirts of the town whose centre it originally occupied. Stretches of pylons and forests of poles have brought electric power out to the country so that it is possible for a factory to be built on almost any site. Where is it more natural to build a modern factory than beside a main road ? For here is a broad route, provided by the State, for lorries which can leave the factory at any time for any destination. Buses and private cars can bring visitors from far greater distances than in the constricted days of railways. The sons of the silk-hatted first-class travellers and even those of the second-class travellers on the old steam trains, could buy private cars before this war. They all have the Englishman's love of the country. In their new-found freedom they used to rush to the country and crowded every accessible town and village with clusters of semi-rural communities extending over a greater area by far than that occupied by the original town. Speculative builders, eager to save themselves the expense of building roads and drains and bringing power to country districts, built villas along the main roads where surface and light and drainage and power were already available. So the roads came into their own again and ribbon development, that most natural development, was the direct result of the motor car. Transport determined the plan and towns spread outwards until they nearly touched one another. Coaching towns on main roads came once more into their own. The old inn in the market square was taken over by a combine and re-furbished in a half-timber style, vaguely reminiscent of a few hundred years before it was built : the stable became a garage : the market square became a car park ; tea rooms opened in the main street ; the old shop fronts disappeared as lorries brought the mass-produced shop fittings, advertisements, films, signs, petrol pumps, magazines, multiple stores, the



VIEW OF DAWLISH FROM THE WEST CLIFF, 1817  
Coloured lithograph drawn by Noble and engraved by Stadler  
From *A Guide to the Watering Places on the Coast, between the Exe and the Dart*



*By courtesy of the City Art Gallery, Manchester*

**VIEW OF MANCHESTER FROM HIGHER BROUGHTON**

Water colour by William Wyld, 1835

Morris's, Fords, Daimlers, buses and chars-à-banc brought the people. On first glance, many towns came to look like a London suburb.

The Railway Hotel remained gas-lit and unused as an overflow for people who could not get in to the old-new coaching inn. Grass grew in the sidings of the branch railway. Finally the line was closed to passenger traffic. The cars, lorries and the luxury coaches roared over the tarmac.

The future of small towns, county towns, cathedral towns, seaports and watering places and spas was insecure. In England, people respect natural scenery and they respect buildings which are manifestly 'old' even if they are sham-antique. Generations of guide book writers have been antiquaries interested only in what is pre-Reformation and sometimes, greatly daring, admiring the early work of the Renaissance. But the buildings of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, those modest brick and stone houses, simple town halls, elegant bridges, terraces and crescents and squares, without which almost every old English town would lose all its texture and proportion, and become as desolate as a bombed area—these relics of the greatest age of domestic building are ignored, partly because they are so reticent, so unobtrusively effective and partly because they are not regarded as ancient. Many original Victorian churches and public buildings are equally ignored. And in reaction from this admiration for the ancient, there has grown up an absurd admiration of what is modern, as though 'modern' meant always a flat roof, a window at the corner, the construction of concrete and steel, imitated in brick; wallpaper designed in cubes and darts of orange and brown; no capital letters, and no seriffs on shop fascias; horizontal glazing bars—in fact not genuine contemporary architecture at all but 'jazz.' This jazz-modern fashion produced as many enormities as the craze for sham Elizabethan. I see it developing beyond individual buildings into easy generalisation about the new world after this war, into silly assumption that everything old must be pulled down and we must all live in skyscrapers made of glass and steel and worthy of the new age for which we fight. Heaven forbid that we are fighting for such textureless materialism. While Ludlow stands, while Burford High Street rises from the Windrush, while the spas and watering places of England stretch crescents and terraces, however old and blasted, to the hills or to the sea, we have an England to protect. Let us rebuild the grey industrial towns where August is unbearable and where the country is out of reach, but let us leave the rest of England alone.

Before the war we stood by and watched an ignorant local councillor or a greedy speculator in housing, ruin the appearance of a whole street by one building of the wrong material; the wrong proportion and the wrong texture and the wrong colour. There were vague bye-laws, earnest local preservation societies and a singular planlessness about local planning.

But the war has given us a double hope. Nazi bombing has built up an affection for the old towns of England among those many who formerly thought little about them: the need for communal effort in so many things has galvanised us into activity. There is at last, what has been wanted for the last fifty years,

a Ministry of Works and Buildings which will, I believe, preserve the old cities and towns of Britain by allowing for future building development on a national scale and along natural lines ; transport will no longer be considered as secondary ; conflicting local bye-laws will be adjusted. The old system of building a new suburb first and letting modern transport come along later, will be abolished.

We have seen in this chapter how the transport has determined the shape of every English town, since English towns began. To-day, a lorry, a bus or a private car can cross England over-night, therefore the whole of England becomes the subject for planning, not a single county, still less a single town. Much rubbish about "opening up vistas," "rural slums," "post war reconstruction," has been appearing lately in the press : but there is no doubt that only by planning on a national scale will we preserve the hundreds of beautiful old cities of England.

For time has softened what was harsh when new  
And now the stones are all of sober hue.

These old towns of England are numerous enough to survive a decade of barbarian bombing. But their texture is so delicate that a single year of over enthusiastic "post war reconstruction" may destroy the lot. Because so many more English people have grown aware of how beautiful are her old cities and towns and because of the hope we place in a national plan to preserve them, these pages and pictures will, please God, serve as a guide to future visitors and not survive as a sad memorial volume.



'THE OLD LADIES'  
Engraving by Helen Binyon



PLACES MENTIONED IN THE TEXT  
Specially drawn by F. Nichols



A TYPICAL MEDIAEVAL CITY  
Illumination from the Luttrell Psalter, c. 1340

## APPENDIX

Do not judge a town by its antiquities alone as do the guide books, nor a town by its pubs, as do the motorists.

Judge it instead by everything you see in it, the new as well as the old, the people as well as the bricks and stay in it and study it with the same reverence that you would study the towns in Italy. Only by so doing will Casterbridge open itself and will Barchester reveal its sequences of architecture and even the Five Towns become a place of pilgrimage.

I give below a list of the dates of various buildings to be found in a town. Since there are few mediaeval, compared with other buildings in most English towns, I have devoted less space to them than the antiquary would desire and more space to the quantity of eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century buildings which make a town.

*Norman (Romanesque). Religious, Secular, c.1050-c.1200*

Round arches, and thick unbuttressed walls in parish churches, a door or an arcade or font. A castle (almost in ruins). A castle mound. A town wall, barbican.

*Gothic (Early English and Decorated), c.1250-c.1350*

Some feature of the parish church. A ruined abbey or priory. Additions to castle or walls.

*Gothic (Perpendicular), c.1400-c.1500*

Most of the church. Town churches were generally re-built in these prosperous times of the middle ages. Market Cross, a small chapel of ease.

*Early Seventeenth Century, 1600-1650*

Almshouses, timber part of an inn, a brick or stone house, rarely more than two storeys high, with brick or stone hood moulds for the windows and a stone bar dividing the window opening into oblong spaces of leaded panes: ancient Grammar Schools.



MARKET CROSS, MALMESBURY  
Water colour by Frances Macdonald

*Late Seventeenth Century, 1650-1699*

Timber cottages : brick houses and stone ones with steep gables and windows as described in paragraph above : almshouses ; small and ancient-looking public houses, approached by steps down from the level of the street.

*Early Eighteenth Century, 1700-1750*

Brick or stone houses, three or four storeys high with carved central doors, long narrow windows with thick wooden bars framing small panes, a parapet along the top hiding the roof. Unitarian, Quaker, Baptist and Congregational places of worship. Larger inns, possibly a custom house in seaport towns or town hall.

*Late Eighteenth Century, 1750-1799*

Large coaching towns: town halls, tall houses with ironwork outside, pillared portico, large windows, largest on ground or first floor, getting smaller in ascending stories. Thinner wooden glazing bars, forming larger and more oblong shaped panes than those mentioned in the last paragraph. Bow-windowed shop fronts; wharves and warehouses of ancient appearance : sometimes whole crescents and terraces of houses. Semi-circular fanlights over front doors, leadwork in varying patterns came in at the end of the century. The earliest Methodist chapels.



### *Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1839*

Oblong-paned shop-fronts, sometimes in bow-window form ; plain stucco façades affixed to seventeenth century buildings to bring them in line with neighbours, terraces, crescents and squares, plain exteriors whose effect is gained by the proportion of window to wall space : detached stucco-villas, plain or Greek, on the outskirts of towns ; canal wharves, quays and locks and bridges ; assize courts, Methodist and Congregational chapels, built or restored in the Greek manner, mostly in plaster or local stone ; new streets, generally broad and straight ; in High Street a row of shops belonging to different firms, but made to harmonise in one scheme : great town halls and covered markets : one or two imitation Tudor villas, generally built in stucco. Trees planted in open spaces where possible, particularly beeches, copper beeches and pseudo-acacias, elms and limes.

### *Church and Chartist period, 1840-1869*

Preliminary 'restoration' of parish churches, introduction of plate glass into shop fronts and removal of old glazing bars in windows (ruining the proportions of their exteriors), the inserting of plate glass instead ; rebuilding of older Non-conformist churches in Italianate and Decorated styles. Private banks, particularly Savings Banks ; early railway stations, generally of local stone and in Swiss, Tudor or Italianate styles : large gardens of eighteenth and early nineteenth century town houses built over with small plain cottages forming courts and alleys at rear of main streets, generally in brick. One or two large merchants' houses in Italian, Tudor or Swiss styles in suburbs. Chapels of ease, suburban churches in stone with spires in Decorated or Early English style. Front gardens of older houses in streets which have become commercial, built over so as to form shops. Corn Exchanges.

### *Late Nineteenth Century, 1870-1899*

Further restoration of parish church ; rebuilding of older chapels in Decorated, Early English and Perpendicular styles (in brick with terra-cotta dressings). Great use of brick, generally red or glazed, for all secular work. Fire Station, Post Office, Public Library, Salvation Army and Mission Halls : railway stations, suburban stations ; streets of bow-fronted, two-storey red brick villas, in terrace form or semi-detached, in neighbourhood of station, very small front gardens with iron fence and low wall and small back garden, these villas sometimes diversified with white brick ; red or brown terra-cotta frontages to banks, institutions and shops ; exclusive villas on outskirts in brick, Gothic or a baroque-ish Queen Anne with plum-coloured gables and wooden balconies, also painted plum, green or white. Red ridge tiles to slate roofs. Drinking fountains and Jubilee clock towers.

### *Twentieth Century, pre-Great War, 1900-1914*

Town Halls and Public Libraries built of glazed brick in a Jacobean style, roofs of villas given bright red tiles ; banks and shops rebuilt in solid Jacobean style ; suburbs of detached houses formed, the houses with bright red roofs,



GREAT SHAMBLES, YORK  
Water colour by Michael Rothenstein

gables, French windows on ground floor, white wooden balconies; laburnum, pink may, behind ornate wooden fences. Arcades of shops built near railway stations; piers, shelters at seaside towns; cottage hospitals; recreation grounds and small public parks: shelters, bandstands and kiosks and refreshment rooms; privet hedges and flowering shrubs in parks; one or two 'artistic' villas, pebble dashed, small windows, sloping buttresses, black-tarred chimney stacks, hygienic looking, belonging to doctors and lawyers who have left centre of town: Elementary Schools.

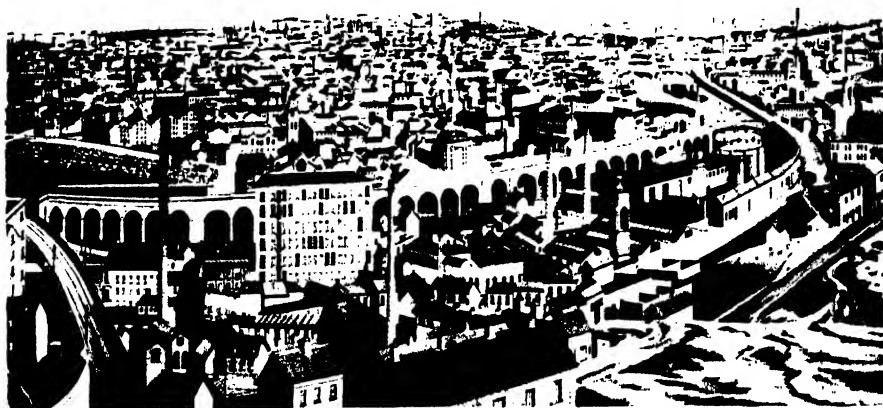
*Twentieth Century. Mid-War period, 1918-1938*

Earlier part of period characterised by quantity of imitation half-timbering added to eighteenth century inns; gables of modern villas, proportions of villas different by reason of standard-size windows mass-produced in wood or steel; whole character of main streets altered by shop fronts of multiple stores with regulation fascia in every town: shop windows enlarged to take up half the first floor of the old houses in which they are set; a great deal of demolition of unpretentious building of previous two centuries and over-furbishing up of 'mediaeval' build-

ings. Banks and Municipal Buildings in a refined Georgian style, generally out of proportion with the rest of the street. Council Housing Estates on outskirts of town, varying in style according to the lack of sensibility of local councils. Large Hospitals. Bungalows on outskirts ; red roofs ; main motor roads lined with two-storey, semi-detached villas with large front gardens, rockeries, sham half-timber gables ; stained glass front doors, chains along garden walls, wooden gates, wooden garages. Garages and tin signs and hoardings on all main roads. Cinemas, very often in a 'modern' style, as may be one or two villas—not really modern, but jazz ; bricks at this time were of a less bright shade of red than earlier in the century. Houses no longer built in terraces, semi-detached or detached and a good way apart, by reason of the Town Planning Acts. Schools.

There are two rules which may form a useful addendum for people on the look out for old buildings. But as they are generalisations they cannot be guaranteed accurate in all cases.

1. *How to tell an old roof from a modern one.* Tiles of uniform size, except in certain parts of East Anglia, Middlesex and Kent and Yorkshire, were not used until well on into the nineteenth century. Stone roofs and slate roofs until about 1850 were always built with their tiles graded from small at the ridge getting gradually larger towards the eaves.
2. *How to tell old bricks, stone and half timber from the modern equivalent.* Use your eyes. Old things are mellow and worn, new things hard and sharp whether brick, stone or wood. Old walls, especially in churches and old brick houses, have been despoiled of their texture by 'snail pointing' with grey cement—that is to say the divisions between the stones and bricks have been emphasised by hard straight lines made with a trowel.



HALIFAX FROM BEACON HILL  
Lithograph from Pearson's *Royal Cabinet Album of Halifax*

# ENGLISH INNS

THOMAS BURKE

We dined at an excellent inn at Chapel House, where he expatiated on the felicity of England in its inns and taverns.

James Boswell (*Life of Samuel Johnson*)

WHEN the first English road was made the first English inn was born. The date of that event no man can name, but from that day to this the inn has been an essential factor of English life and a delightful feature of the English scene—as familiar to English eyes as the church, the castle and the cottage. It serves us all, whatever our rank, and at all times it has reflected our habits, our fashions in food and furniture, and the prosperity or agitations of our times. The story of any of our older inns is therefore an epitome of the story of ourselves ; and an unbroken journal of the doings of an old inn from the day of its opening would give us a close history of its town and a fair social history of England.

The England that we cannot find in the Town Hall we can find in the inn. Not only did it afford shelter and entertainment to the traveller : it was a semi-official centre of its town. It was regularly used, and sometimes still is, as a Coroner's Court, as a Churchwardens' Court, as a Court for the election of borough officers, and even Quarter Sessions have been, as late as mid-Victorian times, held at the inn. The rate-books of many a town show that the Councillors preferred the local inn to the bleak Town Hall for their meetings, and that the debates were carried on as a literal symposium ; three or four pounds for wine is a frequent entry. The election of borough officers was almost always held at the inn, and was always followed by a dinner debited against the town's rates. Distinguished visitors were entertained by the Mayor and Council at the

local inn; election committees made it their headquarters; and the Mayor used it as a second Parlour for meeting indignant ratepayers.

Of our very earliest inns we know nothing. The story of those British, Roman and Saxon inns is buried with their fragments. Not until the fourteenth century do we begin to get, in picture and word, a stray glimpse or two of what the inn then was and the nature of its life. Then we perceive, from the illuminations of the Luttrell Psalter and similar MSS. of the time, and from Langland's *Vision concerning Piers the Plowman*, that the peculiar qualities which we find and enjoy in our inns of to-day were even at that time a part of the spirit and substance of the inn.

The English inn has developed from the style it first took; a replica of the English home of each period, charged with English traits and their attendant defects. In the centuries before the railway, every man who travelled twenty miles from his home had need of its services and amenities, and it was to the innkeeper's interest to provide these in as good measure as or better than those of the traveller's own house. Mostly he did, and that is why to-day the old inn is often the noblest building of its town or district, and, in many a town, the only feature worth travelling to see.

By their lifelong aim to keep up with the times, our old inns now afford examples of the architecture of many centuries. In them we see the ages pressing upon each other in the form of relics of the loving craft of the days when men were proud to use their hands—thirteenth-century stonework; a fourteenth-century king-post; a stately staircase or Tudor panelling; elaborate ironwork; carved ceilings; an Oriel window; a Tompion clock; a decorated fireplace and overmantel; a musicians' gallery—as fine, in each example, as any to be found in the great private mansions. The mere exterior of some of them lends poetry to the street in which they stand—as the *Angel* at Grantham; the *Talbot* at Oundle; the *Flying Horse* at Nottingham; the *Lygon Arms* at Broadway; the *Boar's Head* at Middleton; the *King's Arms* at Dorchester; the *George* at Southwark; the *King's Head* at Shrewsbury. They shine like jewels of old wood or stone, sometimes set in a cluster of harmonious companions, sometimes solitary in a village, and sometimes—such is the English way—given a setting of utilitarian shops and stores.

In their very signs our inns echo the events of our national story and make themselves part of the English pageant. All ranks of English life are celebrated, and many of our occupations, sports, legends, and heroes. In the days when few people could read, the sign was necessary to trade, and shops proclaimed their business by a model of what they had to sell or by a picture of some associated crest or badge. The earliest taverns displayed the sign of the Bush (a bundle of boughs and leaves) a custom adopted from the Romans who used this sign for their *tabernae*; and the earliest inns displayed the sign of the reigning king or of the lord of their particular manor, or some figure from his heraldic shield.

Thus we have the *White Horse*—originally the Saxon banner and later the badge of the house of Hanover; the *Sun*—the badge of Richard Cœur de Lion; the *White Hart*—the badge of Richard II; the *Boar*—the badge of Richard III; the *Red Lion*—John of Gaunt; the *Rose*—the Tudors; the *Feathers*—the Black Prince; the *Bear*—the house of Warwick.

Our mythology and folk-lore are recorded in the *George & Dragon*, the *Griffin*, the *Dick Whittington*, the *King & Tinker*, the *Robin Hood*, the *Mother Red Cap*, the *Miller of Mansfield*, the *Mad Tom*, the *Cat & Fiddle*. The Crusades are commemorated in the *Saracen's Head*, the *Lamb & Flag*, and the *Trip to Jerusalem*. From heraldry we have the *Chequers*—the field of a coat-of-arms; the *Unicorn* and the *Tabard*. Our sports are celebrated in the *Falcon*, the *Sparrow-hawk*, the *Fox & Hounds*, the *Talbot*, the *Dog & Duck*, the *Maypole*, the *Pheasant*, the *Compleat Angler*, the *Cricketers*.

Our occupations are signified sometimes under their own names, as the *Weavers' Arms*, the *Saddlers' Arms*, and so on, and sometimes under the crests of their Guilds: the *Dolphin*—the crest of the Watermen; the *Three Compasses*—Carpenters; the *Wheatsheaf*—Bakers; the *Three Horseshoes*—Farriers. In the past a particular inn would be chosen as the meeting-place of men of a particular occupation, and it would become the headquarters in each town of that occupation. In its rooms men were engaged, wages were paid, grievances were heard, and subscriptions for sick members were opened. So, in towns throughout the country, we find numbers of inns and taverns of the signs just named; while for the rural occupations we have the *Pack Horse*, the *Woolpack*, the *Jolly Waggoner*, the *Jolly Farmer*, the *Hay Wain*, the *Row Barge*, the *Green Man* (forest ranger or game-keeper), the *Coach & Horses*, the *Woodman*, the *Horse & Groom*.

Our monarchs are celebrated in the *King's Arms*, *King's Head*, *Queen's Head*, *Crown & Sceptre*, the *Garret*, the *Royal Oak*, the *Three Crowns*, the *George* and the *Albert*. Army and Navy are celebrated in the *Grenadier*, the *Golden Hind*, the *Blenheim*, the *Trafalgar*, the *Lord Nelson*, the *Hero of Waterloo*, the *Alma*, the *Rodney*; prominent families in the many *Russell*, *Grosvenor*, *Howard* and *Dorset Arms*; and even our food and drink are remembered in the *Haunch of Venison*, the *Round of Beef*, the *Cheshire Cheese*, the *Rum Puncheon* and the *Black Jack*.

When, with the spread of learning, and the naming and numbering of streets, the sign was no longer necessary, it was generally discarded. The inn alone retained this form of identification. It has never effaced itself in an impersonal street number, and innkeepers have always jealously guarded their right to a particular sign, and have always given much thought and fancy to their signboards and supports, and made them familiar and welcome features of the highways and main streets.

THE oldest of our still-existing inns are those which originally were Pilgrims' inns or Maisons Dieu. In the early days nobody travelled for pleasure or for the delight of looking upon rural scenery. Only serious temporal or spiritual business took them out. The great majority never left their home-town in a lifetime, and those of the ordinary people who did make a journey made only a rare pilgrimage to the shrine of some saint. The regular travellers—the chapmen, packhorse men, messengers and vagrants—were served by the ale-stakes and the roadside inns. The pilgrims were served by hostels supported by the Church, where the very poor were given hospitality for two nights without charge. Those hostels mostly stood in the precincts of the abbey or cathedral, or just outside the gates of the town, where shelter of some sort was necessary, since at nightfall the gates were irrevocably shut till dawn. Of this class of still-existing inn are the *George*, Glastonbury; the *Falstaff*, Canterbury; the *Star*, Alfriston; the *New Inn*, Gloucester; the *Angel*, Grantham; the *George*, Norton St. Philip; the *Pilgrim's Rest*, Battle; and the *Bell*, Tewkesbury.

The accommodation they offered was lenten in its simplicity. The floors were of stone or earth, strewn with rushes, and the bedroom was a room common to both sexes, fitted with a number of pallets. Even in the regular inns of the fourteenth century, where charges were made, the accommodation was not much better, and there was no fixed arrangement for meals. Whatever was needed was specially prepared and cooked. Each guest brought or purchased his own food, and gave his own directions for its dressing. In the better inns of the larger towns the host sometimes kept a table, and guests had the choice of taking their meal with him or of ordering to their own fancy and dining in their own rooms. Chaucer, in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, shows us the group of pilgrims supping at the host's table, and gives us a picture of the host which is a picture of any good innkeeper of to-day.

The fifteenth century saw an increase of travel and an increase in the number and quality of inns. Some of the most gracious inns of to-day owe their graciousness to the portions that are of that period or earlier. Among them are the *Luttrell Arms*, Dunster; the *Swan*, Minster Lovel; the *Lion*, Buckden; the *Maid's Head*, Norwich; the *King's Head*, Shrewsbury; the *Bell*, Thetford; the *King's Head*, Aylesbury; the *Bull*, *Sittingbourne*; the *Chequers*, Tonbridge; and the *George*, Salisbury. Those of the sixteenth century showed still further improvements in their appointments and conduct. The only London example still to be seen of a galleried inn of this period is the *George*, Southwark, founded 1554. Many inns whose main structure is of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries date back, so far as their sites and foundations, to even earlier times, though not all of them were originally built as inns. Roman paving has been found at the *Red Lion*, Colchester, and in one or two other inns



A TAVERNER

Woodcut from Caxton's *The Game of Chesse*, c. 1474

the opening of bricked-up portions of the cellar has revealed Norman crypts. Of the inns of early foundation which have been from time to time restored or even rebuilt are the *Bell*, Finedon (1042); the *Ostrich*, Colnbrook (1106); the *Angel*, Blyth, Nottinghamshire (1270); the *George & Dragon*, Speldhurst (1270); the *Crown*, Chiddingfold (1383); the *Red Lion*, Colchester (1470).

Beautiful houses they are, and deserving of all that William Harrison said of them in his *Description of England*, a work of the late sixteenth century. He speaks of the "great and sumptuous" inns of the highway towns, capable of entertaining two or three hundred people and their horses at one time; of the excellent furniture; of the competition among innkeepers to outdo each other in splendour, and of the comeliness of their houses. A little later, Fynes Moryson, in his *Itinerary*, was equally lavish of praise:



The world affords not such inns as England hath, either for good and cheap entertainment after the guests' own pleasure, or for humble attendance on passengers, yea, even in very poor villages . . . As soon as a passenger comes to an inn, the servants run to him . . . Then the Host or Hostess visits him, and if he will eat with the Host or at a common table with others, his meal will cost him sixpence, or in some places but fourpence ; but if he will eat in his chamber, he commands what meat he will, according to his appetite . . . While he eats, if he have company especially, he shall be offered musick, which he may freely take or refuse . . . it is the custom, and no way disgraceful, to set up part of supper for breakfast . . .

There is no place in the world where passengers may so freely command as in the English inns, and are attended for themselves and their horses as well as if they were at home, and perhaps better, each servant being ready at call, in hope of a small reward in the morning. Neither did I ever see inns so well furnished with household stuff.

By the end of the sixteenth century, carpets had been introduced and the walls of the best rooms were hung with tapestry or embossed leather. The host kept a generous table, and the food, drawn largely from local woods and rivers, was more various and particular than the standardised meals of the inns of our own time. If the kitchens of those inns were without some of the imported foods that we know, they used many that we have forgotten or never heard of. The Roast Beef of Old England was a more prominent dish of the eighteenth century than of the sixteenth or seventeenth, and the dishes most in favour at the Tudor and Stuart inns were—brawn, neat's tongue, capon, goose, swan, venison, kid, hare, plover, snipe, larks, capon, boar, sturgeon, crayfish, carp, pike, trout, elvers, lampreys, pigeon-pie, rook-pie ; and for sweets—warden-pie, olive-pie, saffron cake, gingerbread, marchpane (an almond paste), custard, medlars, citrons, nectarines. The drinks were wines of Gascony, Orleans and the Rhine, and sherris (sack), malmsey, muscadine and beer. The cooking was varied, according to the locality, by the use of local recipes.

The seventeenth century, which brought the coach, brought a still further increase in the number of inns, and many inns which to-day are historic treasures then opened their doors for the first time. The best of these were originally the private mansions of wealthy merchants of the time—as the *Feathers*, Ludlow ; the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway ; the *White Hart*, Scole, Norfolk ; the *Haycock*, Wansford ; the *Talbot*, Oundle ; the *Ship*, Mere ; the *Peacock*, Rowsley ; the *Dolphin*, Norwich ; the *Middle House*, Mayfield ; the *Crown*, Uxbridge ; and the *Duke's Head*, King's Lynn.

William Harrison, in his remarks on the inns of his time, commented on the large sums spent by innkeepers on their signs. He did not live to see the sign of one of these seventeenth-century inns—the *White Hart* at Scole. That magnificent carved sign, one of the wonders of Norfolk, straddled



THE FEATHERS, LUDLOW

Early nineteenth century water colour by George Shepherd

the roadway and consisted of twenty-five life-size figures classic and mythological. It cost over £1,000—a fantastic sum in seventeenth-century money—and was described by Sir Thomas Browne as the noblest sign-post in England. It is known to-day only by old prints. In the early nineteenth century it was taken down and its figures scattered, and nobody knows what became of them.

But we may still see a few signs of that period, or at least the beautiful iron-work of their supports, at the *Bell*, Stilton; the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough; the *Falstaff*, Canterbury; and the *Bull*, Redbourn; and wrought-ironwork of a later date may be seen in the signs of the *Swan*, Knowle; the *Swan*, Charing; the *Ship*, Mere; the *Cock*, Hadleigh; and the *Angel*, Woolhampton.

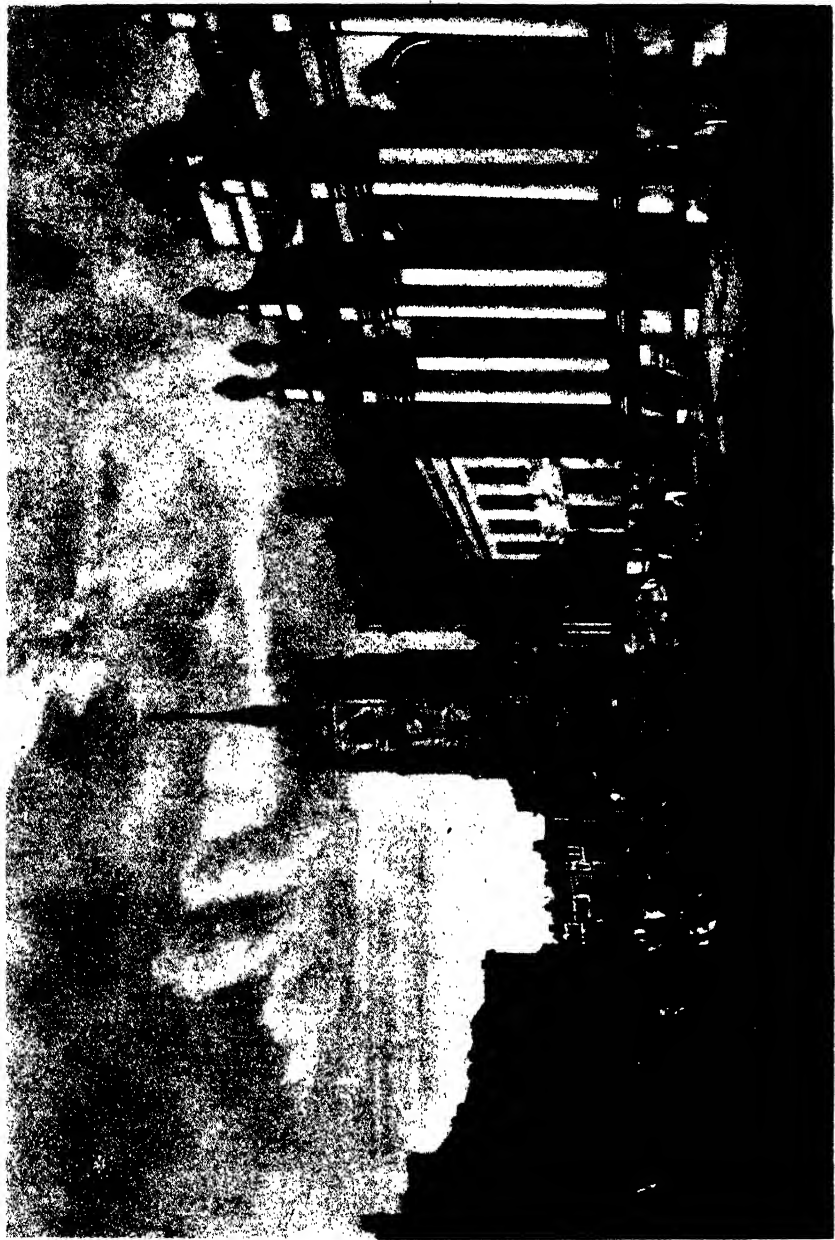
As the seventeenth-century inn shows us the best domestic building of its time, so does the eighteenth. Satisfying examples of the square box of deep-red brick and white window-frames are the *George*, Axminster; the *Lion*, Shrewsbury; the *Crown*, Bawtry; the *White Horse*, Ipswich; the *George*, Stamford; the *Red Lion*, High Wycombe; the *Bull*, Dartford. Some of these are of an earlier date. Since the inn throughout its life has constantly re-constructed itself to keep up with the times, many old inns at that time modernised themselves by putting on a Georgian apron.

Sometimes this re-construction has been done without need or reason and with unhappy results. In some of our old inns nineteenth-century wall-paper has been found covering old linen-fold panelling; stucco covering sixteenth-century half-timbering; false whitewashed ceilings covering seventeenth-century plaster-moulding. In recent years we have seen many an eighteenth-century inn or tavern pulled down by its brewer-owners and rebuilt not, (which would be fitting) to designs of to-day but to a trumpery self-evident fake of Ye Olde Tudor. But our genuine old inns, like old manor houses, have something of all periods. Each generation has added a wing here or a floor there, so that often you find a nineteenth-century façade, eighteenth-century bedrooms, a seventeenth-century musicians' gallery, a sixteenth-century yard and outhouses, a fourteenth-century cellar, and a twentieth-century kitchen and dance-floor. And the taste of to-day is not to cover up the work of the dead and gone, but to reveal it, even if it is Mid-Victorian or as recent as the nineties.

The first thirty years of the nineteenth century gave the inn its highest time of activity and growth, and its largest tribute of appreciation. Coach travel and post-chaise travel was at its peak. The inns were crowded, and were alive with a warm bustle night and day. New wings were added; stabling was enlarged; post-boys worked in relays through the twenty-four hours; the kitchen fire was never out, and bells were always ringing. George Borrow has given us a picture of an inn typical of the period:

The inn of which I had become an inhabitant was a place of infinite life and bustle. Travellers of all descriptions, from all the cardinal points, were continually stopping at it; and to attend to their wants, and minister to their convenience, an army of servants, of one description or other, was kept; waiters, chambermaids, grooms, postillions, shoe-blacks, cooks, scullions, and what not, for there was a barber and hair-dresser who had been at Paris, and talked French with a cockney accent . . . Jacks creaked in the kitchens turning round spits, on which large joints of meat piped and smoked before great big fires. There was running up and down stairs, and along galleries, slamming of doors, cries of "Coming, sir" and "Please to step this way, ma'am" during eighteen hours of the four-and-twenty. Truly a very great place for life and bustle was this inn. And often in after life, when lonely and melancholy, I have called up the time I spent there, and never failed to become cheerful from the recollection.

Increase of business brought new customs. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the inn had had no common dining-room. Each party dined in a private room, distinguished not by a colourless number but by some fanciful name—the Rose, the Sun, the Fleur-de-Lys. The poorer travellers dined in the kitchen. But with the turn of the century, the Tudor and Stuart custom of a common table was revived for the coach-breakfast and the coach-dinner. Resident guests or those travelling by their own post-chaises, still dined in private, but the ordinary traveller took his place at the big dining-room or coffee-room table, and



**MARKET HALL, SUDBURY**

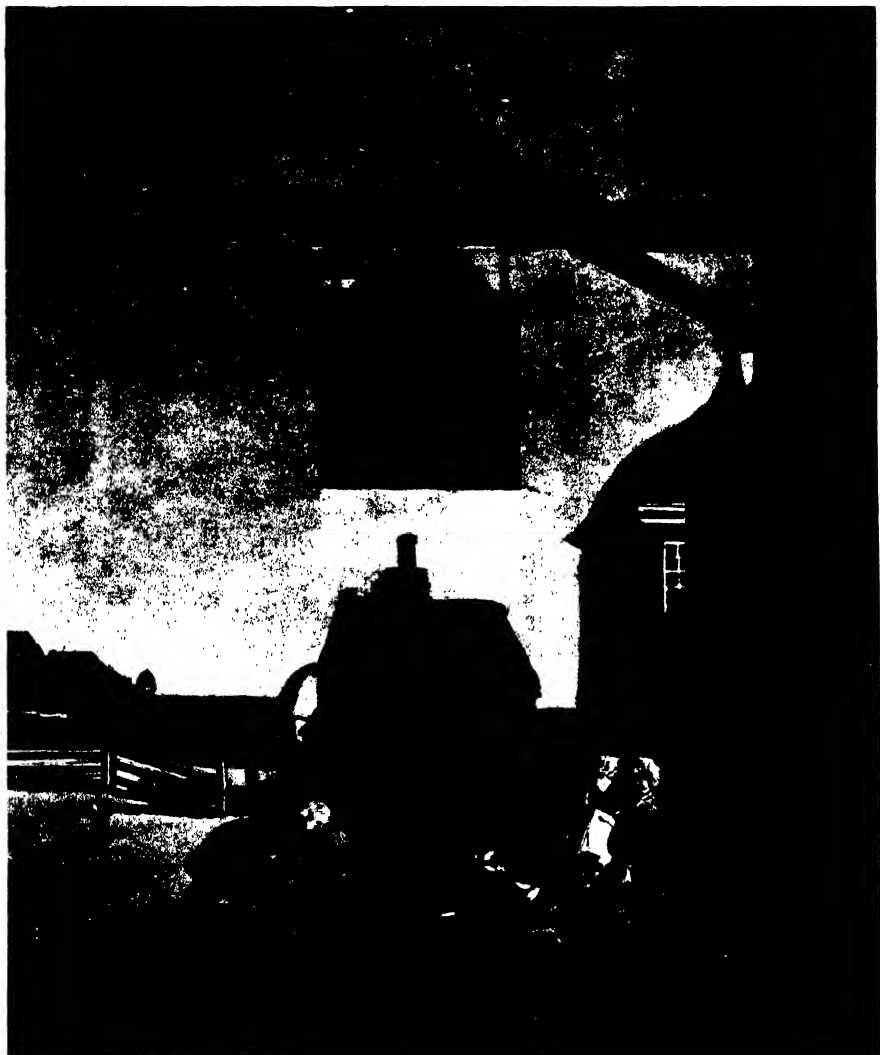
Drawn by Bacon and engraved by Walker, c. 1850

*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery, London*



WEST PROSPECT OF OXFORD  
Water colour by William Turner, 1789—1862

*By courtesy of Professor Lightfoot*



THE *SUN* PUBLIC HOUSE  
Water colour after William Hogarth, 1697-1764

dined on the dishes of the day. The modern custom of one common dining-room set with separate tables did not come into use till Mid-Victorian times.

Another new custom introduced in that Corinthian hey-day of the inn was a tiresome custom which will never, it seems, become obsolete—the custom of the Tip.

But just when the main-road inn was enjoying such business as it had never before known, and when new inns were being built along the new coach-routes, disaster arrived and all the bustle was stilled, and the bright lights extinguished, and the warm rooms occupied by chill. The railway came and brought with it, for hundreds of noble inns, ruin. It made its own road. It touched many towns off the coaching routes, and ignored many of the then-prosperous highway-towns. The realist inn-keepers closed their doors and sold up. The hope-against-hopers lingered on and saw their business dwindle and their rooms and stables year by year moulder away. As, in the seventeenth century, to meet the demand for accommodation, many private mansions became inns, so, a hundred years ago, with the withdrawal of the demand, many of the famous Georgian inns became private residences or farm-houses.

In their place arrived something that was quite out of the tradition and that, even with the popular passion of the time for innovation, never succeeded in winning the affection won by the inn. It had all the faults of the old inn and none of its graces. It was called the Railway Hotel, and it sprang up outside every important railway-station. Sprang up is right, since from contemporary accounts it seems to have been hastily built and to have impressed everybody with a sense of the new and raw and bleak. It did not have a long life. It was soon displaced in its turn by the great, solid, ugly but comfortable modern inn or hotel in the centre of the town.

As the inn faded from the English scene—it was believed, at that time, for ever—so began a series of laments for it, the most heartfelt coming from those who, while it was there, had been most critical of it. For the new hotel they had no welcome; they complained that it offered all luxuries except comfort. Their thoughts lingered still with the old abused inn, and they wrote verse and prose charged with pathos to its memory. The old inn was dead, and would never be seen again. Everything was rush and turmoil, and the times were out of joint. The prophets were of course wrong, but they were only doing what every generation does.

The decay of the Good Old Inn is being lamented even in our own time, and still the inn goes on getting older and older and more and more modern, and winning the appreciation of all except those who must always hark back for their pleasures. Here is one of the many wails of the railway age :

The old, legitimate, delightful idea of an Inn is becoming obsolete ; like so many other traditional blessings, it has been sacrificed to the genius of locomotion . . . The rapidity with which distance is consumed obviates the need that so long existed of byway retreats and halting-places . . . The rural ale-house and picturesque hostel now exist chiefly in the domain of memory ; crowds, haste and ostentation triumph here over privacy and rational enjoyment . . . Old Walton would discover but few of the secluded inns that refreshed him on his piscatorial excursions ; the ancient ballads on the wall have given place to French paper ; the scent of lavender no longer makes the linen fragrant ; instead of the crackle of the open wood-fire, we have the dingy coal-smoke and exhalations of a stove . . . Not only these material details, but the social character of the inn is sadly changed. Few hosts can find time to gossip . . . Jollity, freedom and comfort are no longer inevitably associated with the name ; the world has become a vast procession that scorns to linger on its route and has almost forgotten how to enjoy.

But the old inns were not dead, nor the habit of leisurely lingering in them ; they were only in a long sleep, and towards the end of the century they awoke. The cycle and the car re-opened the road, and the inn was re-born, and with it all those pleasures that belong to it. Some of the private mansions which, centuries back, had become inns and, with the decay of the road, had reverted to privacy, made one more change and again became inns. With the re-discovery of the joy of the open road, the roads became so populous that the old inns were too few, and with the twentieth century came the guest-house, the private hotel, the light-refreshment cottage with a whimsical name, and eventually, alongside the inns which began in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the American road-house set itself, bang up-to-date with palm-lounge, snack-bar, cocktail-bar, swimming-pool, dance-floor and jazz-band.

Six hundred years separates the road-house from Chaucer's *Tabard*. Yet the atmosphere and tradition are one. They and their company are linked in an unbroken line. Only the appointments are different. Each is the typical English Inn of its period.





AND for many of us, some of the pleasantest hours of our lives have been those spent at the typical English Inn. By this social institution—which, if it did not exist, we would have to invent—all the grace of those beautiful houses mentioned earlier may be enjoyed by any of us, at the cost of a pound or so, as though they were our own. Shenstone's lines are not now so apposite as they were; the Arctic Nod of a girl-clerk is more often our reception than the Warm Welcome of a beaming Host. But once past the reception-desk all those amenities and satisfactions catalogued by Johnson are ours.

In the old inn we are in the stream of English life of this hour and of long ago; part of a procession without end of travellers like ourselves on their daily occasions. In the room where we sleep, men, differently dressed from ourselves, were sleeping a hundred, two hundred, three hundred years ago. That room which for us is lit by electricity, was lit fifty years ago by gas, and a hundred years ago by a moderator-lamp, and before that by wax-candles, and again before that by a rush-light. The kitchen that has served us has served generation after generation. The yard that shelters our runabout has sheltered their phaetons, gigs, post-chaises and horses. The unexpected step in the passage that trips us tripped them. Where we are playing billiards or darts they played tables (backgammon) or chequers or passage or shuffle-board. They sat on that bench in the ingle-nook, worried by the times as we are, or relinquishing their worries in facetious talk and silly stories and songs. The rafters heard their loud complaints of bad service, high charges, poor food, as the cushions of the chairs hear our nervous and half-shamed mutterings on the same theme.

The old inn is no antiquarian exhibit, no frozen relic of the past. It lives in one long continuous Present. Its guests from time to time change their clothes and their ways of speech and their tastes in food, but they are one string of guests, and any landlord of the past, if he could look round the dining-room of an inn of to-day, would recognise the same types as he had known in his own days. The atmosphere of any inn that we are enjoying was made by them, as we are helping to make it for those who follow us. Its traditions have grown not from imposed law but from the oddities of its landlords and from the auras of generations of the departed.

Each of our older inns has, as I said, some special feature or relic of the past to give an extra zest to its general interest. These are not dead museum pieces; they are beautiful old things in current use, and are retained only because they are still as useful as their modern equivalents. The *King's Head*, Aylesbury, has a perfect fifteenth-century stained-glass window lighting a noble room of the period, used as the smoking room. The *Luttrell Arms*, Dunster, has a similar window. Other beautiful old windows make part of the charm of the *George*,



INN AND POST OFFICE  
Coloured engraving from Eugène Lami's *Voyage en Angleterre*, 1830



YARD OF THE KING'S ARMS, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON  
Water colour by T. H. Shepherd

Salisbury; the *Reindeer*, Banbury; and the *Angel*, Grantham. The *Maid's Head*, Norwich, has a delightful Jacobean bar, as fresh and apt to its purpose to-day as when it was first put to use. At the *Talbot* at Oundle you go up a staircase which came from Fotheringay Castle. The inn is built of the stone from the ruins of that castle which was destroyed in the early seventeenth century. The cellars of the *Angel* at Guildford are a mediaeval crypt. At the Shrewsbury *Lion* you will find a ball-room and musicians' gallery designed by the brothers Adam, and at the *George* at Axminster a dining-room and fireplace from the same hands. At the *Beverley Arms*, in that Yorkshire town, they have a great sixteenth-century kitchen; at the *Oxenham Arms* at Zeal a Tudor gateway and Stuart fireplaces; and at the *Fox & Hounds* at Beauworth, water is pumped by the original water-wheel which served it in the long-ago.

The yard was always an important feature of the best inns; the earliest plays were given in the inn-yards of the time, and the structure of those yards, with their bedroom galleries, gave the modern theatre

its form. Interesting yards, with work of many centuries, are those of the *New Inn*, Gloucester ; the *George*, Huntingdon ; the *Eagle*, Cambridge ; the *George*, Southwark ; the *Saracen's Head*, Southwell ; the *George*, Norton St. Philip ; the *Ostrich*, Colnbrook ; the *Rose & Crown*, Wisbech ; the *Shakespeare*, Stratford-on-Avon ; the *Rose*, Wokingham, and the *White Horse*, Newmarket.

Ancient doorways and porches are those of the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway ; the *Cock*, Stony Stratford ; the *Bear's Head*, Brereton ; the *Haycock*, Wansford ; the *Keigwin Arms*, Mousehole ; the *White Bull*, Ribchester ; the *White Horse*, Ipswich ; the *Castle*, Chiddingstone ; and the *Luttrell Arms* ; among many others. Fireplaces and chimney-pieces of early periods are part of the furniture of the *White Swan*, Stratford-on-Avon ; the *George* at Odiham ; the *King's Arms*, Amesbury ; the *George*, Crawley ; the *Queen's Head*, Ludgershall ; the *White Horse*, Shere ; the *Maid's Head*, Norwich. The *Luttrell Arms* has a most elaborately moulded seventeenth-century fireplace and overmantel, and in addition to its old fireplace, the *White Swan* at Stratford has some unusual mural paintings of the sixteenth century on subjects taken from the Apochrypha. The best of panelled walls and carved ceilings are those of the *Feathers*, Ludlow, a treasure of a house inside and out ; and fine panelling also embellishes the *Grantham Angel* ; the *Long Melford Bull* ; the *Tonbridge Rose & Crown* ; Mayfield's *Middle House* and Sittingbourne's *Bull*.

As the innkeepers of the sixteenth century gave much thought and fancy to their signs, so did those of succeeding centuries, even to our own day. Many of the signs of the past were the work of recognised artists. Hogarth's sign of *The Man Loaded with Mischief* is well known. Morland is said to have done one or two, though none has been with certainty identified ; but it is certain that David Cox painted the sign of the *Royal Oak* at Bettws-y-coed. This is no longer used as a sign ; it is fixed under a glass frame over the hall fireplace. In the nineteenth century it became quite a fashion for artists to amuse themselves in this way, especially among the inns of the Thames Valley, where signs were painted by Walter Crane, Marcus Stone, G. D. Leslie and Caton Woodville. Just before the present war there was a revival of interest in this matter, and an exhibition was held of inn-signs painted by modern artists. Many of the companies owning country inns had new and impressive signs done for all their houses, and in some cases well-known artists were employed.

The most important feature of an inn, more important than its age, its architectural grace, its oak beams, its yard or even its kitchen, is its landlord. A landlord of the wrong type can ruin the most fortunate inn. The comfort of the guests is in the hands of the staff, and the members of the staff of an inn always take their note from the landlord. If he is temperamentally unsuited to innkeeping, no amount of willing service

from the staff, or of his own energy, organising ability or business acumen will bring him success. He must not enter it as men enter other businesses—purely for profit. He must enter it as a vocation, because he loves it and has pride in it and in his house and its story.

Innkeeping, from its very beginning, was recognised as something more than a mere trade. It was seen as an honourable calling, and the good innkeeper was expected to have the grace of the good private host, to be not a shopkeeper but a householder entertaining, if not angels unawares, at least honest fellow-creatures in need of pleasant treatment as well as sustenance and shelter. The first innkeeper sketched for us is the host of the Southwark *Tabard*. Chaucer's *Tabard*, which was to be seen, or parts of it, in Borough High Street as late as 1880, was the most noted of the many inns outside the gate of London Bridge, and its owner was the most noted of Southwark's innkeepers. Chaucer's picture was not a lively piece of fancy; it was a sketch from the life. Henry Bailly was the actual host of the *Tabard* in Chaucer's time, and, as his name implies, he was descended from a family who had been bailiffs of Southwark. He was himself at that time both bailiff and Member of Parliament for the Borough. He was, as the good innkeeper should be, and as Chaucer sketches him, a man fit to take his place in any company—"a seemly man"—"bold of his speech and wise and well taught"—"a merry man"—"a fairer burgess is there none in Chepe."

He has had many successors, and though to-day the head of an inn is too often only a salaried manager, when we do find an inn run by its resident owner we find him to be such a man as Henry Bailly. Later centuries afford many examples conforming to his pattern. An innkeeper famous in his town and all along the London-Holyhead Road was the owner of Shrewsbury's chief inn, the *Lion*. Robert Lawrence was not only a good host; he was a man of enterprise who brought much business to his town. Up to his time, the late eighteenth century, the coaches for the Irish packet had by-passed Shrewsbury and had gone to Holyhead by way of Whitchurch and Chester. By his own personal agitation in interesting local people, in getting inns opened along the Welsh road, and in starting a coach of his own to go by the shorter route, he succeeded in getting the Holyhead traffic diverted from Chester to Shrewsbury, to the great profit of his town. His services are recorded in a tablet to his memory on the wall of the church in whose yard he lies, not far from his famous inn.

An innkeeper of equal standing and consequence was the keeper of the *Swan*, at Stafford, where, according to his own story in *The Romany Rye*, George Borrow worked for a time:

He knew his customers, and had a calm clear eye which would look through a man without seeming to do so. The accommodation of his house was of the very best description; his wines were good, his viands equally so, and his



COURTYARD OF THE *TABARD*, SOUTHWARK, LONDON  
Engraving by Jackson after Prior, c. 1780

charges not immoderate ; though he very properly took care of himself. He was no vulgar innkeeper, had a host of friends, and deserved them all. During the time I lived with him, he was presented by a large assemblage of his friends and customers with a dinner at his own house, which was very costly, and at which the best of wines were sported, and after the dinner with a piece of plate estimated at fifty guineas. He received the plate, made a neat speech of thanks, and when the bill was called for, made another neat speech in which he refused to receive one farthing for the entertainment, ordering in at the same time two dozen more of the best champagne.

Many innkeepers in provincial towns were members of the local Council, sometimes Mayors or J.P.'s. Always they took a prominent part in local functions, sports, charities, and so on. As G. P. R. James said in one of his now-unread novels, speaking of the inns of the eighteenth century :

The landlords in England at that time—I mean, of course, in country towns—were very different in many respects, and of a different class from what they are at present. In the first place, they were not fine gentlemen ; in the next place, they were not discharged valets-de-chambre or butlers who, having

cheated their masters handsomely, and perhaps laid them under contribution in many ways, retire to enjoy the fat things at their ease in their native towns. Then again they were on terms of familiar intercourse with two or three classes, completely separate and distinct from each other—a sort of connecting link between them. At their door, the justice of the peace, the knight of the shire, the great man of the neighbourhood, dismounted from his horse and had his chat with mine host. There came the village lawyer . . . There sneaked in the doctor . . . There the alderman, the wealthy shopkeeper, and the small proprietor or large farmer. But besides these the inn was the resort of a lower or poorer class with whom the landlord was still upon as good terms as with the others.

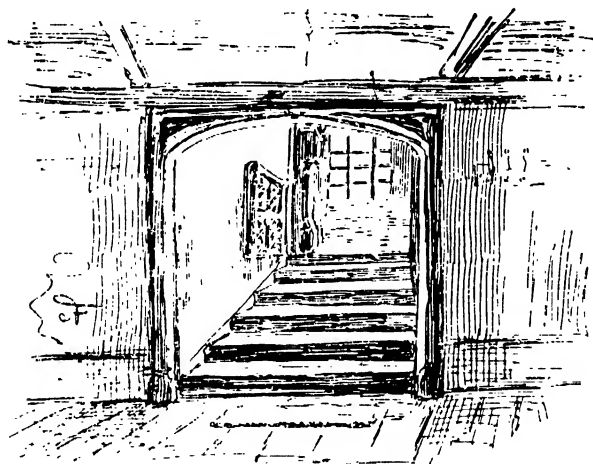
Such a man was Anthony Wilson, landlord of the Grasmere *Swan* whose epitaph was written by his friend and regular customer, Hartley Coleridge. And men of similar character were Cooper Thornhill, of the *Bell*, Stilton, who first sold to the public the famous cheeses which became known by the name of his town though they were made in Leicestershire; Cartwright, of the *George*, Buckden; "Young" Percival, of the *Haycock*, Wansford; George Clark, of the *Bell*, Barnby Moor; Peake, of the *Royal Anchor*, Liphook; the Dennett family of the *White Hart*, East Retford; Lawrence, of the *Bear*, Devizes; all of whom have been recorded in nineteenth-century diaries or sketches, and are part of the story of England's inns. The last of that type of landlord was Harry Preston, of the Brighton *Albion*.

Though innkeeping closely touches domesticity, the women innkeepers were few. Fielding has given us a sketch of one of his time—the landlady of the *Bell* at Gloucester, a sister-in-law of Whitfield, the preacher: "Her person and deportment might have made a shining figure in the politest assemblies . . . To be concise, she is a very friendly, good-natured woman; and so industrious to oblige that the guests must be of a very morose disposition who are not extremely well satisfied in her house." Later in the eighteenth century a notable figure of the road was the centenarian hostess of the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough, Mrs. Soller. Notable personages of the nineteenth century were Mrs. Nelson, who kept the *Bull* at Aldgate and ran a line of coaches; Mrs. Mountain, of the *Saracen's Head*, Snow Hill; and the Misses Dibble of the *Anchor*, Ripley. Of the present century there is Miss Murray, of the *George*, Southwark.

That these hosts and hostesses earned the compliments that have been paid them in *Memoirs and Recollections* is proved by the number of the compliments and their unanimity. Americans particularly have shown much appreciation of the English innkeeper of the nineteenth century; it appears, from what they say, that in their own country they had nothing like him. There, it appears, the situation of host and guest was the reverse of the English custom; the American landlord, instead of giving deference,

expected it to be given to him. He was, as one put it, not the servant of the public but its master, and there was a total contrast between the "courteous devotion" of the English innkeeper and "the nonchalance, even despotism" of his American cousin.

In recent years we have seen in England a new type of innkeeper, and running an inn has been adopted as a profession by men who have been figures of other professions. Among them are Mr. John Fothergill, formerly of the *Spread Eagle*, Thame, and later of the *Three Swans*, Market Harborough; Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis, who made the unique hotel at Port Meirion; Mr. Barry Neame, formerly of the *Hind's Head*, Bray, now of the *Golden Hind* at Hythe in the New Forest; Mr. Gordon Russell, of the *Lygon Arms*, Broadway; and Captain Fremantle, of the *Spread Eagle*, Midhurst. Like the enlightened innkeepers of the past, they are maintaining the best traditions of the inn, and giving it new life and a new store of honest principles.



INTERIOR OF THE *LYGON ARMS*, BROADWAY  
Drawing from *The Antiquary*, 1887,



THE inn is, and always has been, the home of Everyman, from the sovereign to his meanest subject. And in the past the sovereign was a frequent patron. Sometimes he held Court at an inn; sometimes he made it his headquarters in battle; sometimes he dined at it, and sometimes caroused in it. Elizabeth could hardly have slept in all the inns with which legend associates her name, nor would she have needed to; in all her "progresses" she landed herself and her retinue on the local lord at his charge. While she may, like her lieges, have halted here and there for refreshment, her sojourns were made in baronial halls.

But other sovereigns did in times of necessity make use of the inn. Richard III, in 1483, made the *Angel* at Grantham his headquarters, and there, in a room that may still be seen, he signed the death-warrant of Buckingham. At the *Crown*, Rochester, Henry VIII, through a peep-hole, had his first sight of Anne of Cleves, and made that rude remark about her. At the *Saracen's Head*, Southwell, Charles I lodged himself when he decided to make the best of a bad dilemma and surrender himself not to the Parliament but to the leaders of the Scotch army. There, in a room in which you yourself may sleep, he slept his last night as a free man, and in what is now the coffee-room he surrendered to the Scotch commissioners who, for a price, handed him over to the Parliamentary Army.

In the West Country a number of inns received, as a flying (and disguised) guest, his son, though only one of these is still in service as an inn. After the battle of Worcester, when the young Prince was dodging here and there, he was once or twice compelled, despite the danger, to resort to inns, and at one or two of them he narrowly escaped recognition. But at the still existing *Talbot*, at Mere, where, in the character of servant to his escort, he stopped to dine, he had a happier experience. The host, a loyalist, did not recognise him, but after saying that he looked an honest fellow, tested him with the Cavalier pass-word: "Are you a friend to Caesar?" and invited him to drink to the King. His last night in England, as Prince, before the escape to France, was spent at another loyalist inn which stood on the shore at Brighton, the *George*.

But more interesting to most of us are the links afforded by the inn with people less exalted, more like ourselves. That is one of the many charms of the inn; it is not only delightful in itself and its comforts and its antiquities, but also in its power of evoking memories and trains of association.

And almost every old inn has some association with the important or piquant figures of the past, many of whom are more warmly alive than the tangible dummies in the lounge this evening. The hall of many an inn brings a thought of Samuel Pepys—the *Anchor*, at Liphook; the *George*, at Salisbury, where he "lay in a silk bed and had a very good diet"; the *Red Lion*: at Guildford, where he had the room



TAM O'SHANTER AT THE INN  
Water colour by George Cruikshank, 1792-1878

lately used by his royal master ; the *Bear* at Cambridge, "where Cromwell and his officers did begin to plot and act their mischiefs in these counties" ; the *Red Lion*, at Barnet, where he "eat some of the best cheese-cakes that ever I eat in my life" ; and the *George*, Norton St. Philip, where he and his company "dined very well, 10s."

At the *George*, Stamford, one thinks at once of Walter Scott, who regularly halted there on his journeys to and from the North. The inn at Burford Bridge brings a cluster of memories—Nelson taking his last farewell of Emma Hamilton ; Keats engaged on *Endymion* ; Stevenson plotting a romance of the road. At the *Lion*, Shrewsbury, one recalls that orchestral passage of De Quincey's *Opium Eater*, in which he describes his sleepless night in its ball-room. At the *Pheasant*, just past Lobscombe Corner on the London-Salisbury Road, pictures rise of Hazlitt drinking pots and pots of tea and writing those papers collected under the title *Winterslow*, when he was living there and the inn was known as *Winterslow Hut*.

Times recent and times long gone throw up their shining phantoms. The *Lion* of Shrewsbury throws up not only the goblin-sque De Quincey,

but the equally goblinsque Paganini, who gave a recital in its ball-room ; and those makers of goblins, Dickens and H. K. Browne, who stayed there in 1858. In the same town the *Raven* brings a memory of the luckless George Farquhar, who was staying there when he began *The Recruiting Officer*, the scene of which is laid in Shrewsbury. The *Bell*, at Barnby Moor, brings a thought of Laurence Sterne, who sometimes halted there on his journeys to and from the capital where he was so agreeably flattered ; and in the garden of the *Bush* at Farnham rises the massive figure of Cobbett who, in a moving passage of the *Rural Rides*, tells us how he stood in that garden late in life, and how it brought back his childhood at Farnham and his first little garden and his blue smock frock and his mother's last words.

The *Bull* at Hoddesdon reminds us of the almost-forgotten Matthew Prior and of his halting there on that journey to Essex described in his *Down Hall* ; and the *Swan* at Grasmere evokes Scott and Wordsworth and an embarrassing incident. When Scott was the guest of his frugal and austere host, they called one morning at the Swan to hire a pony, and the landlord unwittingly disclosed the fact that Scott had been regularly calling there for what he could not get at Rydal Mount—"Ye're early this morning for yere glass."

And there is scarcely an inn of the South and Midlands that does not bring to mind some pleasant or acid comment from the four volumes of the *Torrington Diaries*, discovered and published some ten years ago. The stout John Byng, who went rural-riding some thirty years before Cobbett, is a complete guide to the inns of the late eighteenth century and the characters of their owners. The *Diaries* are concerned with nothing but his tours, and he mentions every inn at which each day he breakfasted, dined, or supped and slept, and usually he quotes the bill and gives a free opinion on the food, appointments, and comfort or otherwise of his bed. He was quick to give praise to comfortable inns and good food, and outspoken in his condemnation of the opposite. Most of the inns at which he stayed on his fifteen tours are still in service, so that you will find very few places at which John Byng hasn't been before you, since, in the fifteen tours, he slept or rested at just on 350 inns.

On the whole he was dissatisfied with his inns, but De Quincey, remembering the inns of that same period, the late eighteenth century, found them altogether superior and their landlords more friendly than those of the high days of the 1820's. But the difference may be due to the fact that De Quincey was looking back from middle-age to his youth, while John Byng was setting down his verdicts hot-and-hot.

Other memories evoked by the inn are of those men and women who never lived and therefore are so much more alive than mortals. Since the appearance in literature of the *Tabard*, the *Boar's Head*, and the *Garter* at Windsor, the inn has been a useful resource to the playwright



RECRUITING AT AN INN  
Oil painting by Edmund Bristow, 1786-1876

and novelist, and almost all novelists in one or other of their books have used it. At the *Upper Flask*, Hampstead, we think of Clarissa Harlowe ; at the *Bell* at Gloucester we meet Tom Jones and Partridge ; and the hall of the *Lion* at Upton-on-Severn is crowded with a gathering of the company of that novel of which Jones is the rather wooden hero—Jones himself, Partridge, the distressed female rescued by Jones, Sophia Western, Mrs. Abigail, Squire Western and half a dozen others.

At the *Bell* at Tewkesbury, one sees that rather painful prig, John Halifax, and directly you enter the *George* at Knutsford you are with the ladies of *Cranford*, arriving for that entertainment which they witnessed in its Assembly Room. At the *Rutland Arms* at Newmarket you meet the barbarian John Jorrocks ; at the *Red Lion*, Clovelly, up comes Salvation Yeo ; and at the *King's Arms*, Dorchester, you see that banquet in progress, with the Mayor of Casterbridge in the chair. At the *King's Head*, Chigwell, (the '*Maypole*' of *Barnaby Rudge*) John Willett is still dozing in the chimney corner ; at the *Pomfret Arms*, Towcester, the

battle between the rival editors of *Eatanswill* is still going on ; and in half a dozen other inns—the *White Horse*, Ipswich ; the *Angel*, Bury St. Edmund's ; the *Leather Bottle*, Cobham ; the *Bull*, Rochester ; the *Bell*, Berkeley Heath, and the *Hop Pole*, Tewkesbury—Pickwick and his friends are still turning life upside down.

So firm a feature of our life is the inn, and so marked its Englishness, that there is scarcely one English writer or foreign visitor who has not paid tribute to it. Chaucer, Harrison and Fynes Moryson began it, and it continued through the centuries up to the specific looking-back laudation of the writers of the nineteenth century and our own times. The Tudor and Stuart dramatists, Izaak Walton, Pepys, Fielding, Smollet, Johnson, Goldsmith, Lamb, De Quincey, Borrow, Hazlitt, Washington Irving, Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, Disraeli, Hawthorne, Surtees, Marryat, George Eliot, Stevenson—all have left records of their appreciation of and delight in it. Most of their eulogies are well known. Here is an affectionate picture by a little-known American writer of the middle nineteenth century, Henry Tuckerman :

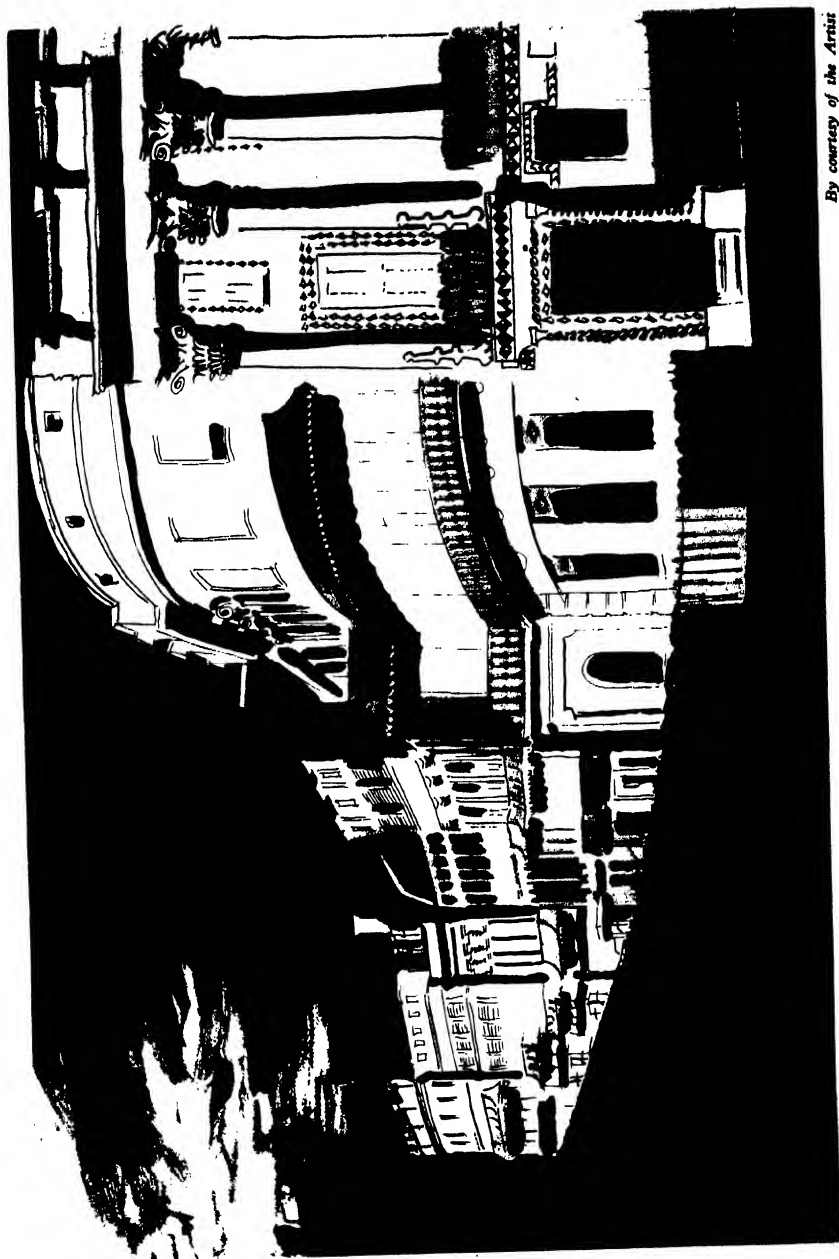
The coffee room of the best class of English inns, carpeted and curtained, the dark rich hue of the old mahogany, the ancient plate, the four-post bed, the sirloin or mutton joint, the tea, muffins, Cheshire and Stilton, the ale, the coal-fire and *The Times*, form an epitome of England ; and it is only requisite to ponder well the associations and history of each of these items to arrive at what is essential in English history and character. The impassable divisions of society are shown in the difference between the "commercial" and the "coffee" room ; the time-worn aspect of the furniture is eloquent of conservatism ; the richness of the meats and strength of the ale explain the bone and sinew of the race ; the tea is fragrant with Cowper's memory, and suggestive of East India conquests ; the cheese proclaims a thrifty agriculture, the bed and draperies comfort, the coal-fire manufactures ; while *The Times* is the chart of English enterprise, division of labour, wealth, self-esteem, politics, trade, court-life, "inaccessibility to ideas" and bullyism.

Yes ; about a hundred years ago the English inn no doubt communicated all that, as to-day it communicates the resources and climate of our contemporary character. It always has done so, and could not do otherwise. That is why, in any locality, the inn will tell the stranger more of that locality and its temper than the Church can. Its existence depends upon its keeping the current pace, and we who are past middle-age have seen how swiftly and silently it can adjust itself to changing conditions and tastes. We have seen stables and coach-houses changed to garages. We have seen old inns, born three hundred or four hundred years ago, turn an Assembly Room into a Palm Lounge or Dance Hall. We have seen an old Powder Closet become a Telephone Booth. We have seen the old yard, where hung the hams and bacon-flitches and pheasants, roofed with glass and turned into a Cocktail Lounge, and a cellar, too



*By courtesy of the Swindon Museum*

QUEENSTOWN BRIDGE, SWINDON, 1885  
Oil painting by G. Puckey



KEMP TOWN, BRIGHTON  
From John Piper's *Brighton Acquaintance*

By courtesy of the Artist



INTERIOR OF A ROADHOUSE  
Oil painting by J. Pollard, 1797-1867



large for the modern capacity for wine, divided and made to yield a basement Billiard Room.

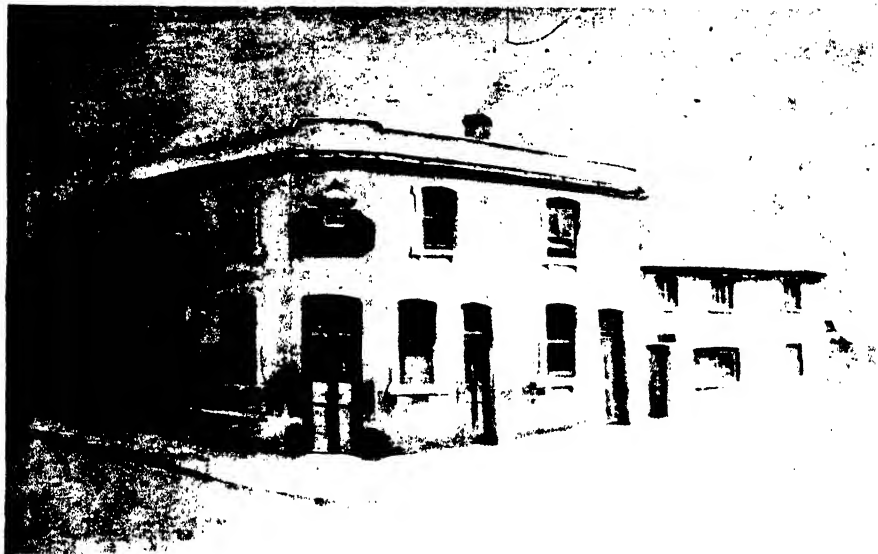
And with all those wrenchings and shovings the old place has retained its original character, and still stands as the oldest thing in its town, wearing all the centuries on its frame and yet as modern as men found it when it first opened its doors in 1623 or 1575. In that, it is like the British Constitution, which can change as often as need be and yet never be mistaken for anything but itself.

Not only have the appointments changed. All details have suffered change. Yet nothing has really disappeared. In the inns of the seventeenth century the important members of the staff were the Chamberlain, the Drawer and the Ostler. They are still in the inns of to-day as Hall Porter, Waiter and Garage Mechanic. Many of us have seen an Ostler translated in three or four weeks into Garage Mechanic. Sometimes the signs are brought into the modern stream, but it is the old iron frame that supports the new legend and device which will, in its turn, acquire a patina of age and association.

Growing old gracefully is one of the inn's many accomplishments, and the staff seems to be subject to this pleasant infection. Porters, waiters, boots and yardmen of the old inns do not dash around from one job to another. Most of us know one or two old inns where the head-waiter was a smoking-room waiter when we were boys, and where Boots of to-day is the Boots we knew forty years ago and not looking a week older. Most conservative of all are the Commercial inns. The Commercial Traveller, living at a constant strain of keeping up with the minute, seems to like to have something static and mellow as a background to his galloping pulse of modernity, and while he appreciates improvements in fixtures, he dislikes change of spirit or structure. The Grand Babylon Hotel of the twentieth century, which is almost a small town on five or six floors, has its appeal at certain times and its advantages for certain occasions, but the comely old inn gratifies both the eye and the mind, and can give all reasonable comfort to the lower senses.

To taste its full savour you should come to it on an evening of autumn or winter, when tired and chilled; not after a cooped and sedentary journey in a car but after a fairly stiff walk against the wind. At such a time the hall fire, glinting on old panels or even shabby old chairs, is a benediction, and the odours from the kitchen, and the glass and napkins of the lighted dining-room make a promise which in itself is delightful even if it is not fulfilled to your expectations. And the last half-hour in the lounge, and the last drink and chat with Boots, and the going up the old worn stairs, and absorbing the atmosphere of the old place, common and transitory incidents of travel as they are, make precious moments.

The dinner the kitchen produced for you was, however, a little different from those of the past. Lusty travellers of the lusty days of the inn's



THE RIFLEMAN'S ARMS, SWINDON  
Oil painting by J. Hood

youth would have considered it a mere snack ; an appetiser to the meal proper. Even seventy years back a country-inn dinner for two people, quoted in a contemporary sketch, was—a turbot of four pounds weight, two roast ducks, an apple-pie, cheese and dessert. Breakfast was cold ham and beef, Cambridge sausages, fried eggs, followed by a roast mallard. At the end of the eighteenth century an inn dinner for one person (John Byng) was—spitch-cocked eels, roast pigeons, a loin of pork, tarts, jellies, custards and cheese. The dinners of the middle eighteenth century, if not of so many dishes, were even heavier in substance, and at the end of the seventeenth century eight or nine courses was usual. In the sixteenth century the dishes were, as mentioned earlier, many and various, and supported by all kinds of side-dishes which have long disappeared from our tables. The high feeding of those times was not due to gluttony. Diversions were few, and at the end of the day's journey there was little to fill the lonely hours but eating and drinking.

But with all this high feeding the inns of the past said little about their food. It seems to have been taken for granted that there would be a generous table, and there was no need to talk, as our inns of to-day do, of "butter and cream from our own farm," or "fruit from our own orchard,"



THE ELEPHANT AND CASTLE, LONDON  
Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

or "home-made honey and preserves." Nobody in those days expected the food to come from anywhere except the local fields. What was stressed is something of which to-day nothing is said. They stressed Good Beds—Comfortable Beds—Well-Aired Beds; and the warming-pan was always on view to re-assure those nervous travellers to whom damp sheets implied certain death. They also stressed Neat Wines, meaning wine unwatered, and Good Post-Horses, where to-day our inns stress Inspection Pit, H. & C. Basins and Gas-Fires in all bedrooms, American Bar and new Dance Floor.

Customs change as well as fashions and material appointments. It was once the custom for the host to be in a very real sense the host of a lonely traveller, to greet him on arrival, farewell him on departure, and, on a Sunday, escort him to church and dine him with the family. To-day our notion of a good host is one who leaves his guests alone, even to the point of being invisible. If the host did not personally greet his guest, it was the custom in many inns for the chambermaid to take to his room, as a welcome to the House, a complimentary glass of sherry or Madeira. Another old custom was that of giving the newly-arrived guest a Serenade by the inn's tame musician, and, on the morning of his departure, an Aubade; neither of which customs was greatly appreciated by those



" His coat is over the shoulder Laid to lay  
And from the Banquet table the Bowl away. "

Robert Wass

a well known waiter at

The Lion Colchester 1770

Wass's Ode  
by J. Dunthorne

ROBERT WASS, A WELL-KNOWN WAITER AT THE RED LION, COLCHESTER, IN 1770  
Drawing by James Dunthorne

with a music sense. Pepys more than once refers to it with distaste. To-day the only serenade the guest receives is a hint from the lounge-waiter that he wants to go to bed, and he is awakened by the more agreeable means of Early Tea.

One very old custom has lately been revived. The earliest interludes and plays, in the days before theatres, were given in inn-yards, and in the eighteenth century strolling players visiting a small town usually gave their show in the Assembly Room of the chief inn; and at the beginning of this century some of the first film-shows that country towns saw were given in the public rooms of inns. Lately, the inn has reverted to entertainment. The *Greyhound* at Croydon has as part of its premises a theatre, and just before the war there was a movement for giving Poetry Recitals in inns and public-houses. During the present war, Hours of Music with distinguished soloists have been given at the *White Horse*, Dorking, and I believe at a number of other inns up and down the country.

An old custom that might, for the public's sake, be revived is one whose lapse has caused much inconvenience and fraying of temper. Up to the end of last century a meal could be had at an inn at any hour; the kitchen was never still. Under this century's organisation and standardisation, the dining-room operates only at fixed hours, and if you arrive late you must go without—or take your custom to one of the little arty "luncheries" which do exist to serve the traveller and which do serve a meal at any hour.

A prominent feature of all the inns of last century was the Visitors' Book. To-day, the official Register, ordained by law, has frozen out the casual and homely Visitors' Book, and one more link in the personal relations between innkeeper and traveller has been broken. Relations to-day, rather than those of Host and Guest, are those of Shop and Customer. But the inn follows the spirit of each generation, and the spirit of the inn to-day is what to-day's people have made it. They don't seem to want personal recognition and effusiveness. They only want impersonal Service. They don't want an invitation to dine with the landlord as a mark of his esteem. They only want Food. They are content to be Numbers: and most of them are.

This spirit of detachment is not really the true English spirit. It is the result of a deliberate pose, adopted long ago by a small clique from a Chesterfield pattern, and copied now by all classes. The accepted figure of the Englishman as a man of marble face and stiff back which no joy or grief can melt or bend, is pure fantasy, a piece of conscious acting. The Englishman by nature is an intensely emotional creature, as anybody knows who has had to attend a race-meeting, a football-match, the last hour of a cricket match with eight wickets down and fifty wanted to save defeat, or a Division on some hotly-contested Bill in the House. His attempts at the Strong, Silent Man are attempts only. He is not frigid.



MID-DAY REST AT THE *BELL INN*  
 Drawing by George Morland, 1763-1804

He is only *being* frigid. He is not unemotional. He is only consciously refraining from displaying emotion. That is why the modern face is so nervous and drawn. In the past, when English friends met, they flung their arms about each other. When they hated, they let everybody know it instead of bottling it up. When they were happy they laughed and sang. In their own or another's sorrow, they wept—and were all the better for it.

The inn itself affords evidence that the English are people of warm feelings, ardent spirit and, if not imagination, at least lively fancy. They could not, if they were the detached, frigid things they try to be, have invested their inns and taverns with such fantastic or ludicrous names, and such a farrago of legend and old wives' tales. Letting themselves go in their true current of emotion and sentiment, they found such names as the *Who'd Have Thought It?*—*Mrs. Grundy's Arms*—*The Old Friends*—*Magnet & Dewdrop*—*Darby & Joan*—*Horn of Plenty*—*Baker & Basket*—*Sun in Splendour*—*Rent Day*—*Mortal Man*—*Merry Month of May*—*Bel & the Dragon*—*Labour in Vain*—*Tippling Philosopher*—*Good Intent*—*Castle of Comfort*—*Cat & Mutton*—*World Turned Upside Down*.

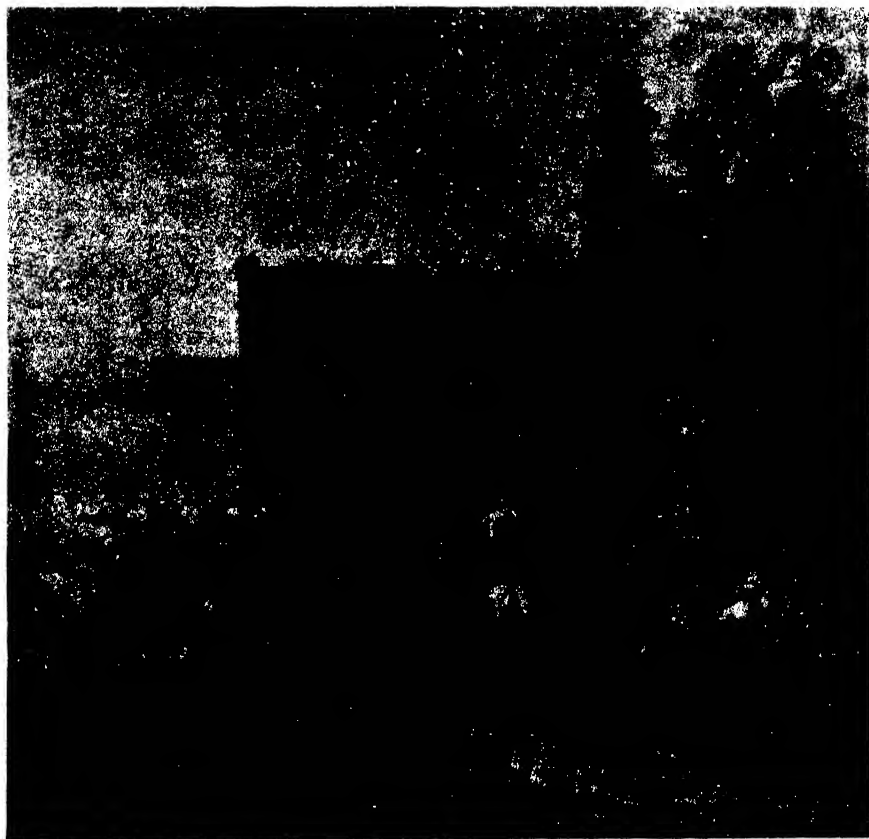
As to legends, wherever there was a lonely inn on a blasted heath, the easily excited Englishman set his fancy to work to furnish it with a story. And so we have the story of the woman traveller, benighted at a lonely inn, and passing the time before retiring by counting her money. After a while she had a feeling that she was under observation, and on looking up she saw on the opposite wall a portrait in oils. And then she saw its eyes move. And when she got up to examine it she found that the eyes of the portrait had been cut out of the canvas to make a spy-hole for the landlord. The story, as such a story should, ends on that.

Many inns have legends of the villainies of their landlords—landlords, that is, of the long past. The most grim and ghastly is the legend cherished by the *Ostrich* at Colnbrook; the legend of the landlord whose dirty deeds are presented in Deloney's novelette—*Thomas of Reading*. In the days before paper-money, travellers on business were compelled to carry their money in specie. For such travellers, if they were alone, the landlord of the *Ostrich* had a special bedroom. The bed was fixed on a trap-door which, when the traveller was asleep, dropped and shot him into the cellar where a cauldron of boiling water was waiting.

And there is a legend of an adventure at an inn on the Great North Road in the early nineteenth century; an adventure with the Hand of Glory. The Hand of Glory was a hand cut from the body of a gibbeted murderer, and it was credited with occult powers, and was used by burglars as a help and protection in their business. A lighted candle fixed within the bones of that hand had the power of casting sound sleep upon all the members of the house in which it was used. Once it was extinguished, its power was gone and the household would awake, but it could be extinguished by one thing only—milk. The story concerns two thieves, who had arrived at the inn as guests. A chambermaid happened to overhear their talk, and saw them getting to work, with a light fixed in the Hand of Glory, to plunder the other soundly-sleeping guests. As she was not asleep at the time they lit it, it had no power over her, and she was able to keep awake, and, by a gallant and hair-raising dash to the dairy, able to foil them:

Dick Turpin has furnished legends to numbers of inns, most of which are right away from the roads he worked, and the nickname of a famous highwayman of the seventeenth century, *The Golden Farmer*, has been adopted as the sign of an inn on the Exeter Road which was once his home. Many a coastal inn is proud of the legend that its eighteenth-century landlord was in league with smugglers, and present owners make a point of showing you the Smugglers' Hole in the cellar or attic. Underground passages leading nowhere are said to have connected with castles of dark story. Priests' holes are discovered, and a priest of the period has to be found on whom a thrilling story of the hole can be fastened. Covered-in wells, found on the premises of some inns, are furnished with a story

by the local romancer ; and bones found when removing walls or excavating foundations are always given a Mistletoe Bough story. Other legends have been created by way of explanation of an inn's ridiculous name—probably from a morbid shame that anybody of the innkeeping profession could be inspired by mad poesy. So valuable indeed are legends to an inn's business, and the Englishman at heart is so much of a romantic, that two well-known inns have even found it worth their while to recall and perpetuate and advertise all the libellous things that Dickens said about them and their service.



A WAYSIDE INN

Water colour by Luke Clennell, 1781-1840





THE GEORGE INN, GLASTONBURY  
Water colour by John Buckler, 1770-1851

**I**N the past a sharp distinction was drawn between the tavern and the inn ; they were controlled by laws peculiar to each other, and held a different form of license. The tavern was restricted to providing casual refreshment, both food and drink, and was usually kept by a vintner. The inn was restricted to the receipt and entertainment of travellers by day and night. Neither was allowed to overlap the other. The tavern was forbidden to harbour guests ; the inn was forbidden to allow itself to be used for "tippling" or as a place of idle resort. The tavern had to close at a certain hour ; the inn had to be open at all hours.

Inn and tavern to-day still hold different licenses, but their functions are more or less common. Most inns to-day, as part of their ordinary business, give the service given by the taverns of the past, and many taverns or public-houses give the service once restricted to the inn. You can now stop at any inn for a casual drink or a meal, and if a tavern or public-house cares to let you have a room for the night it may do so. The inn, so long as it has room, is *bound* to give you shelter—and at any hour.

The very old tavern or public-house is not so common as the inn. Most public-houses are owned by brewers, and they are rather given to



RICHARD LEE AT THE *GOLDEN TOBACCO ROLL* IN PANTON STREET, LONDON  
Engraving after William Hogarth

"enlarging," which means, not adapting, in the manner of the old inn, but completely demolishing and rebuilding. And so we see a snug little Jacobean or Georgian tavern wiped out, and a three-sizes-larger public-house erected on the site, with all Modern Improvements, but with a stark atmosphere from which the spirit of the place, still present in our skilfully renovated old inns, has completely vanished.

The essential function of the inn was, as I say, to afford rest and food to the wayfarer. The essential function of the tavern was to afford a rendezvous for its townsmen and a place of recreation. The inn still fulfils its old function, and has kept its social place from its beginning up to this week. But the tavern or public-house, though continuing its service, does so with a difference. While it is still used, as always, by many ranks and classes, it is no longer a rendezvous for the leading men of the age. With the coming of the coffee-house of the later Stuart times,

and the club of the later Georgian times, both of which encroached on the tavern's business, it suffered a set-back, and by the middle of the nineteenth century it had become something quite different from its old self.

It ceased to be the meeting-place of the first wits and poets, of Ministers and solid merchants and dignified burgesses. The serious, the prosperous, and the titled ranks turned their backs on it, and made the private club their centre. Even the easier social world of the established poets and artists deserted it. It began to be regarded as "low." Men who, fifty years earlier, would have been tavern men became club-men. Theodore Hook, a natural tavern man if ever there was one, and who would, in the middle eighteenth century, have had a tavern chair, had, as a man of his time, a chair at Crockford's and the Athenaeum. And so the fashion grew, and the club, as a social centre for the leading men of their time, took the place formerly held by the tavern. The Tavern declined into the Mid-Victorian Pub.

But what a past it has had ; what company it has seen ; what things it has heard. We think of the *Mermaid* and the *Mitre* in Cheapside ; of the *Devil* at Temple Bar and the *Falcon* on Bankside ; and the *Spiller's Head*, Clare Market ; the *Turk's Head*, Gerrard Street ; and most of us, I fancy, would rather make one of the company at any of their evenings than sit around in the best clubs of to-day. At those Cheapside taverns, and at the *Falcon*, the poets and playwrights of the English Renaissance met, and their patrons, Raleigh, Southampton and Essex. Pepys at his taverns sat with other Government officials and ministers, or with more homely company enjoyed madrigal-singing. At the *Star & Garter*, Pall Mall, Swift and Addison and others gathered. The *Spiller's Head*, in Clare Market, was a resort of Dr. Radcliffe, founder of the Radcliffe Museum, and of Hogarth and Colley Cibber and Churchill. Another of Hogarth's haunts was *Slaughter's*, in St. Martin's Lane, which also knew Roubilliac the sculptor and Gardelle the miniature painter, who was hanged for killing his landlady in the heat of a quarrel. In later days it was the resort of Haydon and Wilkie.

And there were those great tavern evenings, in the middle eighteenth century, at the *King's Head*, Ivy Lane, the *Turk's Head*, Gerrard Street and the *Queen's Head*, St. Paul's Churchyard, and the *Mitre*, Fleet Street, with the company named in Boswell—Garrick, Goldsmith, Beauclerk, Reynolds, Burke and Thomas Percy ; though even then Respectability was beginning to frown on the tavern : John Hawkins referred to the Johnson coterie as "low ale-house associations." Later in the century, at the Covent Garden *Queen of Bohemia*, Sheridan would meet his friends, and others of the company were the actor, George Frederick Cooke, and the penniless and homeless Irish poet, Thomas Dermody. The *Salutation & Cat* in Newgate Street was a favourite rendezvous of Lamb and



A TAVERN IN KNIGHTSBRIDGE, LONDON  
Engraving by Nugent after Tiffin

Coleridge, when, as young men, they met to drink egg-hot and discuss metaphysics and poetry; and later there was Edmund Kean's *Coal Hole* in Fountain Court, Strand, and the *Cyder Cellars* in Maiden Lane, and the two theatrical taverns, the *Harp* in Russell Street and the *Craven Head* in Drury Lane.

Taverns then were the regular centres of the arts, and many periodicals of the time seem to have been edited at tavern tables. As late as the fifties, as we see from Edmund Yates's *Recollections*, the weekly issue of the papers he was connected with were planned and prepared at tavern meetings; and even our great and respectable satirical weekly was founded

at meetings at the *Edinburgh Castle* in the Strand and the *Crown* in Vinegar Yard, and its first editor was an ex-publican.

Provincial towns, too, had old and picturesque taverns where the bright and the serious of the town met for gossip and debate and song. But records are few. Taverns kept no Visitors' Books, and Boswells were rare. Of all those London taverns named above not a brick or rafter is left. There remains only, to show us what they were like, the *Cheshire Cheese*. And for the lore of the old and vanished taverns of the provincial and country towns, we must go to the respective local histories or to such specific publications as Mr. L. C. Lloyd's lately-published booklet on the taverns past and present of Shrewsbury.

The taverns have been and still are centres of political debate, of argument on technical developments in literature and painting, of discussions on moral philosophy and religion, of gossip (and no doubt slander) and of all that piquant or pungent and always extravagant pleasantry which the most staid Englishman can release in his hours of ease. And they still are a part of the social life of a large section of the community, not only as rendezvous for recreation but as Lodges of the various Friendly and Benevolent Societies and of Slate Clubs, and as the headquarters of clubs covering all manner of interests from angling and pigeon-fancying to chrysanthemum-growing and archaeology and bowls.

In recent years they have entered a new phase. In the new residential suburbs, under the more advanced owners, they have become rather domestic than convivial centres. In contrast to the old dark and dingy late-Victorian places, they are large and open and airy, with no partitions and with daylight all round them. They are dressed in light paint and fitted with light furniture. They have a children's room, a games room, a garden, a dining-room, and no bar. They are built as places to which the whole family may decently go, and they appear to be successful. But none of our taverns, new or old, are now the rendezvous of wits and beaux and gallants and noble lords, and they have no chairs to be put, a hundred years from now, in glass cases for reverent inspection as the tavern-chairs of the Great Men of their Age.

But the inns where the bowmen and the halberdiers and the packmen lodged and lingered we still have for our use and delight. That delight, as I say, began with the earliest travellers, and has been constant. But it was not until the temporary eclipse of the old inns that people began to compare and rank them, and to collect their lore, and to cherish them just because of their age. In the Stuart days nobody found anything to relish or admire in the structure and aroma of a fifteenth-century inn. In the eighteenth century nobody found any special interest in staying at a black-and-white gabled inn of the sixteenth century; they preferred and praised those of their own time. Nor did anybody then think it worth while to write the story of England's inns. They were so much in



THE MEET OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE INN  
Pen drawing by H. Furniss 1854-1925

the foreground of every hour of current life—like our railway-stations—that nobody thought about their past. Only with their eclipse did this interest begin, and then it was expressed only in fugitive magazine articles. Not until the present century was a book devoted to them and their history, and their part in the social development of England; it was in 1906 that Charles G. Harper published his two handsome volumes, *The Old Inns of Old England*, the first and best work on the subject. Since then many volumes have appeared until now we have quite a large “literature” of the old inn, and it is recognised as one of our precious possessions, celebrated by each town on picture-postcards and even on cigarette-cards.

And we amateurs of inns know that they are worthy of our recognition and affection, and we look hopefully to the time when we can again make a tour of our favourites and enjoy the little stimulations they always give; when we can re-visit our special riverside inn and find out if it can still make that perfect cherry-tart; when we can find out whether that sixteenth-century place on the Great North Road has lost the trick of its luscious sherry-trifle; and whether Boots at the old house on the

Bath Road is still 75—as he has been for the last fifteen years. And I hope we shall get happier answers than Matthew Prior got when he revisited an old inn after some years absence :

Come here, my sweet landlady, pray how d'ye do ?  
Where is Cicely so cleanly, and Prudence, and Sue ?  
And where is the widow that dwelt here below ?  
And the ostler that sung about eight years ago ?

Why now let me die, Sir, or live upon trust,  
If I know to which question to answer you first ;  
Why things since I saw you, most strangely have varied,  
The ostler is hanged and the widow is married ;  
And Prue left a child for the parish to nurse,  
And Cicely went off with a gentleman's purse.

What damage will have been wrought among them by the time the fighting ceases, we do not know ; we can only hope that the most nobly aged have been spared. If so, then when easy travel is again possible, you might find a pleasant holiday in making a period tour through the centuries. You might begin with the stone-fronted *Angel* of Grantham, or *George* of Glastonbury, and pick up the Tudor age of half-timbering at the *Shakespeare*, Stratford-on-Avon, or the *New Inn*, Gloucester. Then to the Jacobean *Feathers* of Ludlow or *Lygon Arms* of Broadway. Then to the Queen Anne *Beaufort Arms* of Chepstow. Thence to the late Georgian *White Hart* at Salisbury ; the Regency *Royal* at Falmouth ; the mid-Victorian *Bedford* of Brighton ; and finish at the late Victorian *Savoy* or the Edwardian *Ritz*, or perhaps the last-built road-house.

Similar period tours could be made in the North and Midlands and other parts. Wherever you go you will be in contact with the still-pulsing story of past England. You may walk down a stone passage with fourteenth-century pilgrims. You may light your cigarette in the room where Richard III stood and fumed. You may sleep in the bedroom where Charles I slept—or lay awake ; and in bedrooms used by Pepys and Charles II and Swift and Boswell and Garrick and Turner and Gladstone and Disraeli and Dickens—and all the Englishmen of distinction who have ever travelled English roads. You will, I hope, have meals which will be something more than food, in a William and Mary or Regency dining-room ; you will go to your room by a Robert Adam staircase, and be able to sit in a Stuart hall, or by a fireplace as good to the eye to-day as it was to the eye of the traveller in the days of the Armada.

And there will be tales to hear of what has been happening in and to the old inns during the war years. Some of those tales, no doubt, will be of a kind fit to be added to the store of the inn's history. Dramatic



ENTRANCE TO PORTSMOUTH HARBOUR  
Oil painting by J. Lynn, 1846

*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery, London*





*By courtesy of Vickers Brothers, London*

FALMOUTH HARBOUR, C.1840  
Coloured lithograph by Newman & Co.



THE *ANGEL*, GRANTHAM, AS IT IS TO-DAY  
Drawing by Walter M. Keesey

events may have centred on some of them ; hurried meetings and farewells ; highly-charged moments. Or perhaps they will have nothing more urgent to tell than an arid story of occupation by Civil Servants.

It may be that after the war there will be, as with the coming of the cycle and the car, such a rush to the roads that we shall need many new inns. What they will be like we cannot guess. So many Planners have been at work—on paper—re-planning our towns, our roads, our villages, and even our leisure moments that there are probably a hundred conflicting plans for new inns from which the worst features of each will probably be selected. But so long as the new inn is suitable to the spirit of this age it should fit well with our townscapes and our country horizons. The English countryside has "taken" every kind of architecture that has been imposed upon it. Where the builder has used the local material, the style, whether harking back or leaping forward, has melted with the background. The oldest inn of Gloucester is the *New Inn*. The oldest inn of Salisbury is the thatch-roofed *New Inn*. Both of them, when their names were apt, must have caused some remark ; there were no doubt many who objected to them as upstarts in style and manner. But we see them now as wholly

right, and if our new inns adopt the style of Broadcasting House or of the latest cinema, they too, in a little time, will be right.

Meantime, the older inns are still with us, keeping themselves new every year. The succession stretches from the early Pilgrims' Inns to the *Ritz Hotel* ; from the fifteenth-century *George* of Salisbury to the hotel at the Airport or the road-house. Wide as the gap is between the *Angel* of Grantham and the *Ritz*, it is bridged by a series of orderly steps. Each successive inn has derived from its fore-runner ; and whatever new form, whatever vast dimensions, the new inn may take, whatever ideas may be imported from other countries, it will somehow take our colouring and our temper and will be the English Inn, the Pilgrims' *Tabard* of to-day.



# BRITISH PORTS AND HARBOURS

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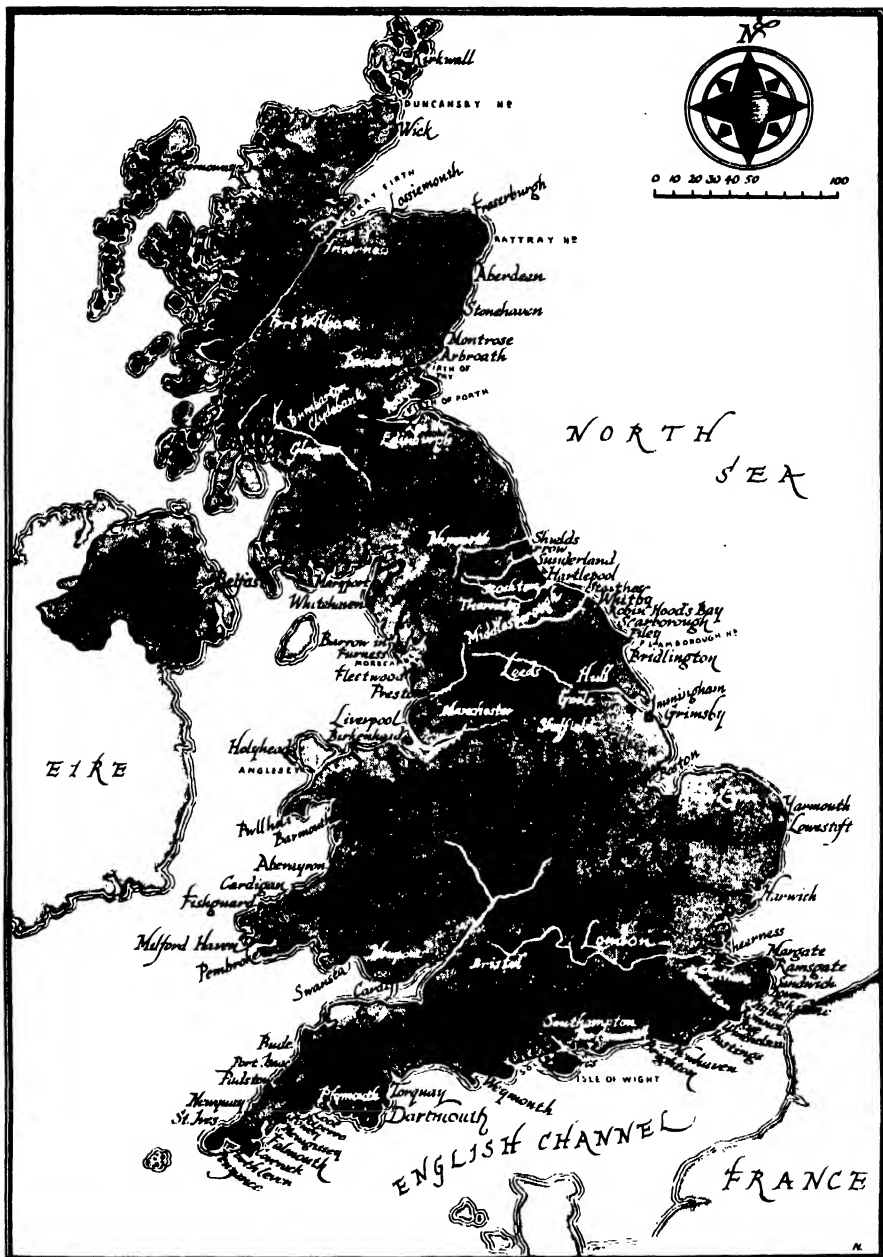
LEO WALMSLEY

**M**Y father, an artist, was born and bred in Liverpool, but when I was very young he emigrated to a small fishing village on the Yorkshire coast near to Whitby, where he thought he could keep himself and his family by painting water-colour sketches of local beauty spots and selling them to the summer visitors, and at the same time continue his more serious work "in oils," which in time he enthusiastically believed would bring him fame and fortune.

Dad had no hankerings for the city and the life he had left. If fame and fortune were destined to elude him, the sea and cliffs and moors, the unspoilt beaches, the quaint village streets, the fisherfolk themselves and their lovely cobbles were for him an inexhaustible inspiration and delight. Mother, too, if she found the domestic arrangements of a damp and dilapidated fisherman's cottage rather trying at times was a true country lover, and only on very rare occasions expressed a longing for what she called "the rush and flow of souls." But both of them often talked about Liverpool. I would listen with great interest and a great envy to mother's descriptions of its wide and busy streets with electric trams running along

them, of shops so vast that you could get lost going from one department to another, of St. George's Hall, and the Walker Art Gallery and the Museum and the Overhead Railway. More exciting still, and breeding a wilder envy, were her descriptions of the Floating Landing Stage, the ferry steamers passing to and from Birkenhead and New Brighton, the big ships coming in and out, the Docks, miles of them, full of ships unloading merchandise from all over the world. One day, when Dad's ship came in (I took this literally as a Spanish treasure galleon, but for Dad it meant the acceptance of his first "oils" by the Royal Academy) we were all going back to Liverpool for a holiday, and I would be able to see these things for myself. Every night when I said my prayers I used to add a special postscript imploring that Dad's ship would come in soon!

True that Whitby, where we would go for a day's outing whenever mother could scrape up enough cash for the railway fare, was a fascinating place. Once ranking sixth among the shipbuilding and shipowning ports of Great Britain (when Newcastle was little more than a quiet market town on a practically un-navigable river) Whitby had passed her industrial hey-day. Sail had long since given way to steam, wood to iron. Her numerous yards, where some of the stoutest of England's fighting and merchant ships were built, including the famous exploring brigs of Cook and Scoresby, were closed or derelict. One of them, the Whitehall had changed over to iron, and had actually built several small steamers. But the yard was too remote from the furnaces and foundries of the Tees, Wear, and Tyne to compete with the tremendous shipbuilding industry that had arisen there, and I was too late to see the launch which was to mark the final closing of Whitehall. Still, Whitby's wooden ships had been built to last. While most of the local owners had put their money into steam, irrespective of where their new ships were built, several held out obstinately against the changed fashion. There was still a lucrative coast trade in Newcastle coal, and as one of the old Whitby graving docks remained open there was usually one or two of these old-timers in port. I could have spent hours in this dock watching the sailors at work on their ship, which would be high and dry, with its hull supported from the dock wall with great wood beams. Some would be scraping her planks, others caulking the seams with oakum and pitch that was melting in a cauldron, filling the air with a lovely tarry smell. A brig like the *Enterprise* did not look quite so good in dock as it did when it was afloat with all its sails set; yet you could get closer to it, and see every detail of the rigging. As well as *real* ships there were plenty of fishing craft in Whitby; cobsles and luggers and ketches; and in summer the harbour would be crowded with Scotch, and East Anglian, and Cornish herring boats, their brown sails unfurled and hanging limp from their masts to dry, their nets draped over the quay-side rails, their crews standing about the fish market, speaking what was for the local fishermen, and for me, an almost foreign



A MAP SHOWING THE CHIEF PORTS, HARBOURS AND COALFIELDS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
 Drawn by F. Nichols

tongue. All these men wore differently patterned guernseys, according to the ports they hailed from. Some wore hard-felted sou'westers, others Tam-o'-Shanters, and brightly coloured scarves. And many of the older men had gold rings in their ears and long hair, so that to me they looked like pirates. Those trips to Whitby in which so many valuable minutes were wasted by mother in shops, were always too short and too far between, and they only served to make me yearn stronger for that long-promised visit to Liverpool.

It came at last, when I was ten years old, not because Dad's ship had come in, but because poor mother got scarlet fever, and I had to be packed out of the way. Fortunately she was not dangerously ill, or my excitement might have been mingled with more than a tinge of homesickness and forboding during the long train journey I made in the company of my Aunt Emmeline, who had come from Liverpool to fetch me. She was much older than mother, dressed in black with a very severe face, and she spent nearly all the time reading the Bible, or telling me to be a good boy, and she was not a bit interested in the things I saw through the carriage window, and although she had lived all her life in Liverpool she did not seem to know anything about the docks or ships.

I was to discover, although the full significance of it did not dawn on me until the next day, that she lived in West Derby, miles from the waterfront, in a gloomy house in every room of which were hung religious pictures or texts; that both she and Uncle James (who was a sort of clergyman, only he did not wear a round collar) thought of nothing all day long but religion, and the converting of the black and yellow races to the Christian faith. It seemed that Uncle James had wanted to be a missionary, but that he had not been healthy enough to go abroad so he made up for this by preaching and writing. He read the Bible and prayed for more than half an hour before breakfast next morning; he said the longest blessing I had ever heard at dinner time, although there was scarcely anything to eat, and no pudding at all; in the afternoon I was taken to the Mission Hall (where he preached on Sunday) and although it was empty we all sat down on a hard wooden form while Uncle said another prayer, and when we got home Aunty took me into the garden, which had very high brick walls, and told me I could play, only I must be very quiet, as Uncle would be writing a sermon in his study. When, after a tea marked by still another blessing, I dared to suggest that I would like to go and have a look at the docks, both of them were horrified. Apart from the docks being dangerous, Uncle said, that part of Liverpool was not at all a nice place for a little boy to be taken to. The men who worked there and the sailors from the ships were a very rough lot. They used bad language, they drank and brawled. There was one street down there called Scotland Road where there was a public house at every corner. The whole place was a haunt of iniquity and sin.



SHIPPING ALONGSIDE THE WEST INDIA DOCKS, LONDON  
Lithograph by W. Parrott, 1813-1869

No. He and Auntie would take me a nice walk to West Derby village, which was very pretty, and later on, if I was very good, he would read to me out of a missionary magazine, a story of how little boys and girls in an African village were being taught about the Word of God, and the True Light of Salvation.

Well, I had had enough of this sort of thing at Chapel and Sunday School at home, and I was not going to be done out of something I had been looking forward to for years. Next morning Auntie was going to take me out for another nice walk (while Uncle got on with his writing) and as soon as she went upstairs to dress, I crept quietly out of the street door and then bolted as fast as I could go down the road, at the end of which, I had observed on yesterday's walk, there were tram lines ; and the first tram I saw bore on it the exciting legend PIER HEAD !

Pier Head, the Floating Landing Stage, the Mersey itself, as thick with real ships as Whitby harbour would be with herring boats in the height of the fishing season ! Even the ferry boats were exciting enough, but there were steamers six times as big as any I had seen before, passing so close I could hear the sailors on them shouting ; and most exciting sight of all, although she was anchored closer to the Birkenhead shore, was a monstrous ship with a black hull and white superstructure and four red funnels. I knew from a picture book I had at home that she was the *Mauretania*, the largest and fastest steamer in the whole world.



I was destined to see that famous ship three times again: once as a hospital ship, painted dazzling white with an emerald band and red crosses, in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Great War ; next, when I actually sailed on her from New York to Plymouth through five days and nights of a violent winter gale which she seemed to regard with a superb indifference ; and last of all on a lovely summer's evening on the Yorkshire coast, when with her lights ablaze, she steamed slowly north on her last voyage to the ship-breaker's yards at Rosyth. But my first view of her will always remain the most stirring of my memories of ships, and for the same reason perhaps, Liverpool, spiritual home of Cunard, stands first in my regard among the great seaports of England, even though the economics of Atlantic trade were to ordain the diversion of the fast passenger and mail service to Southampton.

It was the start of a day of mounting excitements and unbelievable joy. I was not bothered about my aunt and uncle. I did feel a bit sad when I thought of mother, and how she would have liked to have been in Liverpool again, but then I quickly thought that most likely she would have wanted to spend most of the time shopping. I wanted to see the docks and ships, and see them I did, or at least as much of them as I could in the course of that swiftly passing day. I could tell where the docks were by the smell of them, without the sight of masts and funnels rising above the roofs of warehouses ; a smell compounded of oil and smoke and tar and spices, a smell that lingers on a ship even when she is miles from land, and is accentuated rather than overcome by the briney vapours of the open sea. There were steamers, huge ones, so close to the dock walls that you could actually touch them. Some had English names. Others were foreign and they were flying foreign flags which I had never seen before. But there was no mistaking a Japanese ship, for there were Japanese sailors on her, and I could scarcely bring myself to move on to the next ship, they were so fascinating. There were Indians, too, wearing turbans ; and I saw a real Chinaman with a pigtail, although he had it coiled up under his hat, and there were dozens of negroes, although to my disappointment they wore ordinary sailors' clothes. I should have preferred to have seen them wearing animal skins, and carrying shields and spears !

I must have gone from ship to ship from dock to dock with my mouth wide open, and my eyes bulging with wonderment. What I could not understand was why Dad should ever have wanted to leave Liverpool and live in a little fishing village when there were so many exciting things to see. I actually saw one of the docks working, and a big steamer, with her decks piled up with new timber come in, straight from the Baltic ; I came to a graving dock, only it was about six times as big as the one at Whitby, and there was a steamer in it, quite dry so that you could even see its keel. And there were scores of men chipping the paint from

its bottom, while others were putting fresh paint on; and on the deck another group of men were putting red-hot rivets into a steel plate, making a terrific row. The cranes alone made up for all my years of waiting and yearning. There was a crane at our village railway station that was worked by hand, and it had printed on it, **LOAD NOT TO EXCEED 2 TONS**. These cranes, and there were dozens of them, worked by steam, and their load was marked, **10 TONS**, and even **20 TONS**! And the things that were coming out, or going into those ships! Great packages with foreign printing on them, casks, rolls of paper, timber, iron rails, bales of cotton and bundles of hides, machinery, and even live cattle. Hundreds of men as well as the sailors themselves were helping in this work. Most of them were very big, and they may have looked rough, and I certainly heard a lot of bad language, and some of them singing songs which I knew were not nice, but I was used to that from the sailors and fishermen at home, and in spite of what Uncle James had said, I did not see any of them drunk or brawling. They were all too busy.

I did not see all of Liverpool's docks. Even in those days there were more than twenty miles of quayside, not including Birkenhead. I did not see Birkenhead, except in the distance across the Mersey. I did not see what perhaps would have been the greatest thrill of all, the great shipbuilding and ship-repairing works of Cammel Laird. I went on and on, seeing and marvelling, long past dinner time into the afternoon. I must have walked miles. I got tired, and very, very hungry. Dad had given me a shilling when he had seen us off at the station. I had already spent threepence out of this for my tram fare. But I could not see any place where I could buy anything to eat. I began to feel a bit uneasy about my aunt and uncle. I wondered if, when I got back, they would be so cross with me they would not give me anything to eat, and would just pray instead. And then a wonderful thing happened. I came to another big steamer and the surprising thing about it was that it had three ammonites painted on its funnel, just the same as Whitby has for its coat of arms. As I was staring up at it I noticed an elderly man with a peak cap and double-breasted navy blue jacket leaning over the rails. He suddenly smiled at me, and then beckoned me to come aboard up the companion ladder. I thought I had never met anyone so kind-looking and jovial. He asked me what my name was and where I had come from, and when I told him the name of my village, he actually said in the broadest Yorkshire voice,

"Well, by Gum! Ah come from Whitby masen. This is a Whitby-owned ship!"

He was the captain. He took me all over his ship, down into the holds and the engine room, explaining everything, but also asking me plenty of questions, and I told him about my aunt and uncle, and how I'd run away from them, and he only laughed and did not seem cross. Then

we went into his cabin and he showed me a lot of curios that he had brought from foreign parts, including a wonderful model native canoe, which he said I could have. I was so excited that I scarcely noticed a man in a white coat, who came into the cabin and laid the table, until he said,

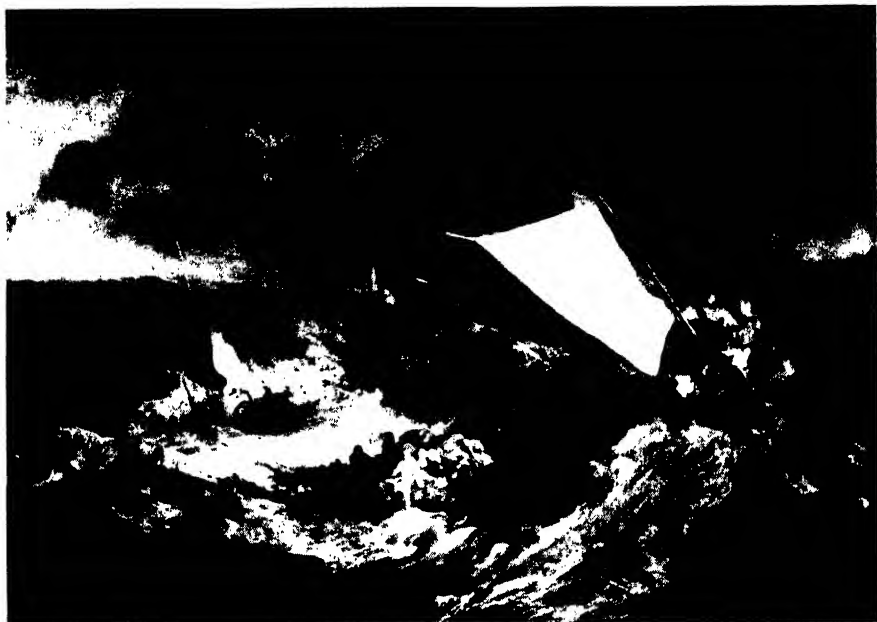
“Tea’s served, sir ! ”

It was the climax of my day’s adventure. We had tea, with ham and boiled eggs, and plenty of cakes to follow. The captain did not bother to say a blessing either before or after. But when we had finished, he said, still not seeming cross, that he expected my aunt and uncle would be getting a bit anxious about me, and that I ought to go back to them, or they might think I had been kidnapped or murdered. We were a long way from where the trams for West Derby started, but as he had to go to the Pier Head himself on business, he would take me there on the Overhead Railway, and that would give me a fine view of the Docks. . . . It was a fine view, but it was a very quick one, and it was the last I was to see of Liverpool’s Docks for many years, for my aunt and uncle took good care that I did not escape again during the rest of my stay, but they prayed and read the Bible at me so much they must have forgotten all about the heathens abroad.

## I

WE island dwellers are apt to take the excellence of our ports and harbours for granted. Britain, we were taught at school, owes its greatness to its equable climate (neither too hot nor too cold), to its rich deposits of coal, to the traditional skill and foresight of its ship-builders, and to the equal skill, foresight and audacity of its mariners, who as merchantmen or in the navy, won for us and maintained a safe supremacy upon the seven seas, so that we could sell or barter the goods we made anywhere we liked. Providence not only gave us coal, but also a fair amount of ironstone, and placed both reasonably close to each other, so that the coal could be used for smelting the iron and making it into steel ; and coal and iron were placed near enough to our seaports where the steel could be used for the building of the ships which would take the surplus coal and steel to other countries, and exchange them for the raw materials, which were essential for our other coal-fed industries ; cotton, for example, which because of our “ not too hot ” climate, we cannot grow ourselves.

Looking at the industrial map of Britain, it does seem that we have been blessed. The great coal measures extend from the Northumberland and Durham coast through Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the Midlands to Wales, in an irregularly slanting band. A similar band slants across the narrow waist of Scotland from Fife to Ayrshire. In north-east England



THE SHIPWRECK  
Oil painting by J. M. W. Turner, 1805

we have the great seaports and harbours of the Tyne, Wear and Tees. Close to the East Midlands is Hull, and to the West Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool. The great coal beds of South Wales are nearer still to the ports of the Severn estuary ; and in Scotland, Glasgow in the west and Leith in the east, are admirably situated, not so much in regard to the actual export of coal, but in relation to the numerous industries of which coal is the life-blood. All these seaports and harbours have undoubtedly contributed and are contributing, a vital part to our country's commercial and military greatness. They are a vital link in the bonds of good will and identical democratic purpose that tie the British Commonwealth and the other free, or once-free nations of the world. But the mistake so many of us make is in regarding them as a special gift of providence, like the coal itself. The truth is that with one or two exceptions Great Britain had no natural good harbours. What you see of them to-day is for the most part man-made.

What are the physical conditions that go to make an ideal natural harbour? First it must have a safe approach from the sea, clear of reefs and sandbanks, or heavy cross currents. Its entrance should be deep but fairly narrow, with a slant to the exterior coast line, so that incoming waves are diverted ; and inside it should at once widen to a deep water

basin with plenty of room for vessels to turn, yet not so expansive that vessels while turning or at anchor are unprotected from winds. Preferably the basin should be hemmed in with hills or high land, but its shores should lend themselves to the building of wharves, jetties and docks, roads and railways. For a harbour to be situated on a river mouth or estuary has its advantages, but also grave disadvantages. The river itself may afford a means of communication for smaller craft like barges to the interior of the country. But when in flood it will be a nuisance, and at all times it will deposit silt, not only in the harbour, but outside in the form of sand banks. Even Falmouth which (with the purely naval harbour of Milford Haven) perhaps comes nearest to the physical ideal, required a breakwater to protect its magnificent basin from the Channel winds and swell. Plymouth and its sister port of Devonport required a breakwater too ; and if Portsmouth and Southampton lie snug from southerly gales in the lee of the Isle of Wight, and have many other natural advantages, these fine ports—as they are to-day—are very much the product of the engineer's ingenuity.

London itself, still the world's greatest seaport, had most of the original odds against it, although it is likely that there would have been no London of importance but for the haven its river and estuary afforded the ships of the Roman and subsequent "colonists." Few of our seaports are so completely man-made as this. To start with, the outer sea approaches to the London estuary along the Kent and Essex coasts are sown with treacherous sandbanks which from earliest time have been the mariner's dread. The great tidal currents of the North Sea and English Channel sweep across the estuary mouth, and with the tidal and fresh water currents of the Thames itself, conspire to choke the deep water channels with precipitated sand or mud. And then, from Gravesend and Tilbury, where the Port of London may be said to begin, to London Bridge where it ends, the estuary writhes like a snake ; the whole of this passage from the open sea, a matter of fifty miles, is one that has always been subject to dense fogs and mists, and the Thames itself in full spate and with a spring tide, is by nature quite a turbulent river.

To me one of the most romantic and exciting aspects of our seaports is the making of them, a feat perhaps not so dramatic as the making of Sydney Bridge or the Great Boulder Dam, but one that has been in progress from the earliest days and can never cease while Britain maintains her place among the maritime nations of the world. Most of them began as mere fishing villages or settlements, and with primitive man the river mouth or estuary site would be a great advantage. All our rivers then would be as well-stocked with salmon as those of Alaska and Siberia and he would be able to make his choice of salt or fresh water fish. The river, too, would be an easy means of communication with the interior for bartering purposes ; dried fish for the corn or cattle of the purely rural or

forest dweller, a trade which goes on to-day between the coast tribes and the interior tribes of many primitive countries. But the river mouth would also be the goal of the continental marauders and invaders ; these fishing villages equally obvious landing places. The villages might have been plundered and burnt, their inhabitants slaughtered, yet, as with the Romans and their plans for national conquest, the sites would have a strong strategic value, taking on now the importance of bridge-heads, and as their vessels were of heavier draught they would build jetties of sorts. Traces of such works have been found on the Thames bank in London, and at several other seaports.

In successive centuries with the consolidation of Britain as a nation, and her concern in offensive and defensive continental wars, her havens became of still greater strategic importance. Ships were vital to her existence. She built them from her native oak, the one-time fishing villages becoming ship yards as well as ports ; and because these were real ships, drawing a fair amount of water, substantial harbour works were necessary. But it was not until the Elizabethan Age, the age of commercial as well as naval and military expansion, that they began to take the shape of the ports as we know them to-day. Their story is tightly woven into the story of Britain's rise to greatness. London, Bristol, Plymouth, Falmouth were the chief ports of the Elizabethan adventurers. Then with the "discovery" of the commercial value of coal, the dawn of the great industrial age, came the rise of ports like Glasgow, Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull and Cardiff.

The steamship was a late comer into the industrial age. Long after the invention of the steam engine and the development of rail transport our growing export and import trade was being borne in wooden ships. That they were grand ships, manned by a grand breed of men, goes without saying ; yet how many of us realise what a perilous business this was, and what a debt we owe to these pioneers of our purely mercantile navy? Visit any of our great seaports to-day and you will see the most wonderful devices for the unloading and off-loading of ships, for moving them in and out of docks or alongside jetties. Channels are deep and accurately buoyed, and they extend well out to the open sea. Remember, too, that a steamship even in bad weather can move in any direction, astern if needs be, whereas a sailing ship can never go astern under her own power, and if she has a head-wind she must make a zigzag course. If our ports and harbours had been as they are to-day, navigating a sailing ship in or out of them would have been a difficult job. In the pioneer days, before the coming even of the steam tug, it must have called for very great skill on the part of officers and crew.

The Tyne, at Newcastle and Gateshead, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, was a narrow, turbulent river running between cliffs, and there was a bar at its mouth with only six feet of water at low tide. Here



GRAVESEND

Coloured engraving printed for Carrington Bowles, c.1750

again were fierce tides and a rock-bound coast subject to gales and sudden fogs. There were lighthouses then of sorts, but no mechanical sirens, and, of course, no radio or submarine fog-signalling devices. To make the Tyne, an incoming ship would have to wait for a favourable state of wind and tide, and God help her if, while waiting, she was caught by a northerly or easterly gale before there was enough water on the bar and she was unable to make an offing. They were necessarily small ships, the first of the Newcastle colliers, and many of them were built and owned at Whitby. Whitby then had two stone piers, shorter than they are to-day, but affording a safe haven in any weather once their entry was made. Here again, however, was a wicked bar, impassable at low water. On a day in October, 1861, a large number of Newcastle colliers, delayed by foul winds, were at anchor in Whitby Roads when, without warning, a fierce south-easterly gale sprang up. The tide was low so that the harbour was closed. Wind and sea, and the turning spring-tide current were soon too violent to permit any of the fleet to beat out to sea, and in the course of the storm which lasted two days and nights, nearly a score of them were driven on to the beach and smashed to bits. There would have been an appalling death roll but for the gallantry of the Whitby lifeboatmen who rescued the crews of twelve vessels before the lifeboat herself capsized with the loss of all her crew save one. Altogether nearly a hundred vessels were lost in that terrible storm at various places along the coast. Look in the old graveyards of the parish churches of any of



THE EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE, c.1750  
Engraving of Rudyard's wooden Lighthouse

our seaports and you will find a grim yet stirring commentary on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' history of British shipping, which runs parallel with the history of her ports. Here is a typical tombstone: 'TO THE LOVING MEMORY of William Moorholm, Master Mariner of the brig *Fanny Dale* lost with all hands while on passage from Newcastle to London. . . . Also of his son, Thomas Moorholm, Master Mariner, of the schooner *Excelsior*, sunk in collision off the mouth of the Thames. . . . Also of Richard and Henry Moorholm, sons of the above and apprentices on the above schooner *Excelsior* when dire misfortune befell . . .'

Ironically the most dangerous hours of a voyage in the old days of sail were when a vessel was making for the very harbour where she would find refuge ; and thus safety was the prime consideration in the construction of our ports, a process which was stimulated by the coming of steam. For steamers, if they were independent of calms and foul winds, were just as liable to ground on inadequately marked reefs or sandbanks. They were equally helpless in fogs. Besides, British trade was now expanding by leaps and bounds. Steamships would be bigger than sailing ships, drawing more water even when in ballast. New and more powerful lighthouses must be erected along our coasts, marking all danger points. Sandbanks must be carefully surveyed and conspicuously marked with buoys or light vessels. Piers or sea walls must be built so that the entrances to harbours would be protected from the vagaries of the weather,



and such things as bars must be removed. Coal was the mainspring of it all. But there was coal in other parts of the world. This natural treasure and even our merchant navy might have availed us nothing if it had not been for the spirit, the inventive genius and the industry of the engineers who, undeterred by the enormous problems that confronted them, laid the foundations of our ports and harbours as we know them to-day.

## II

THE ports and harbours of Great Britain are not easily classified. In the old days it would have been simple, for most of them were granted charters called "staples," giving them the exclusive right to trade in specified products. You could say to-day that Newcastle and Cardiff are the chief coal ports and that Manchester and Liverpool stand for cotton, and Glasgow for shipbuilding, and Hull and Grimsby for fish, and Southampton for passenger traffic, and London for about everything except coal. Newcastle and Cardiff certainly are the country's chief coal ports, but it would be bad economy if a ship took a cargo of coal, say, from Cardiff to the Argentine, and came back empty for another one. The principles of barter apply to ports as they do to countries. The ship would return with a cargo of grain or hides or tallow to be discharged at Cardiff whose docks are equipped for handling general as well as specialised merchandise. Liverpool and Manchester may have a virtual "staple" in the import of raw and the export of manufactured cotton; but despite the divergence of the fastest Atlantic passenger traffic to Southampton, Liverpool remains among the world's premier passenger ports, and she and Manchester have a huge share in the handling of general merchandise as imports and exports.

Although rather outside the scope of our title, this survey would be incomplete without a passing reference to Ireland and the great city and seaport of Belfast, which is situated at the head of Belfast Lough. The approaches to the harbour are safe and easy and it has a fine system of docks and the fact that all the coal used has to be imported has in no way retarded its development. The chief industry there is shipbuilding and the great firm of Harland and Woolf alone employed over 25,000 men even before the present war; but Belfast is also an important manufacturing town whose main industries are linen weaving, distilling and rope-making.

The truth is that all our great seaports have a general as well as a specialised trade. Glasgow and Newcastle build ships, but they import grain and fruit and timber. Hull and Grimsby are best known as fishing ports, but in peace time they have an immense trade in timber with Scandinavia and Russia. Hull (again in peace time) competes with Newcastle and Leith in the passenger and fresh fruit traffic to the



BRISTOL

Water colour by J. B. Pyne, 1800-1870

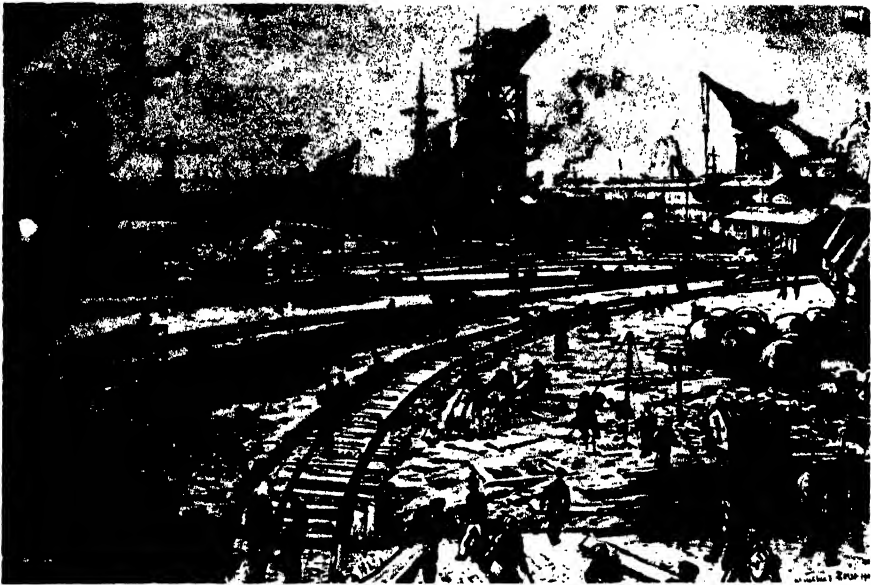


GREENOCK IN 1840



LEITH HARBOUR IN 1842

Coloured engravings from the drawings by W. H. Bartlett



ROSYTH DOCKYARD: AFTERNOON  
Drawing by Sir Muirhead Bone

countries of Northern Europe, yet both trade direct with America, North and South, the Far East and the countries of the British Commonwealth.

Let us then make a broad survey of the coasts of Great Britain, starting at the north-east tip of Scotland and coming south. In this part of Scotland there are no deposits of coal or other important minerals. Even agriculture is confined to a comparatively narrow belt between the coast and the bleak mountainous interior. In a stretch of more than a hundred miles, until we get to Inverness, Wick is the only seaport marked in conspicuous type on the map, although there is the important naval base of Invergordon on the Cromarty Firth, and from Inverness east to Rattray Head, then south to Aberdeen, there are only Lossiemouth, Fraserburgh, and Peterhead. Wick and the last three may indeed be said to have a "staple" trade in fish. That wide triangle of sea enclosed by a line drawn from Duncansby Head to Rattray Head, with its apex the Moray Firth, is famous as a herring ground. It is here that the herring fleets, English as well as Scotch, start fishing in early spring gradually following the shoals south through summer and early autumn to East Anglia. But even as fishing ports Wick, Lossiemouth, Fraserburgh are small and seasonal in their activities. The picturesque city and seaport of Inverness owes its comparative importance to its situation at the head



ENTRANCE TO THE PORT OF DUNDEE

Engraving from Finden's *Ports, Harbours and Watering Places*, 1839

of the Caledonian Canal. But the canal does not tap any vast industrial area and Aberdeen, although a seaport and city of size, has had its industrial development limited by the absence of nearby coal. Aberdeen's chief industry is, of course, fishing, not so much herring as deep-sea trawling, the annual value of her landings reaching well over the value of two million pounds in normal times. Aberdeen has a good harbour, and many general industries including granite quarrying, brewing and distilling, paper-making, and the manufacture of textiles. But all her coal must be imported from the south, and her chief shipping trade, apart from fish, is coastal. Moving south from Aberdeen there are the minor fishing ports of Stonehaven, Montrose and Arbroath: then, on the Firth of Tay, nearer to the coal beds of Fifeshire we get one of Scotland's most important seaports, Dundee, with its jute and linen mills and other extensive industries, including brewing and distilling, and jam-making, all or nearly all dependent on coal for power and on foreign ship-borne cargoes for their raw material. Dundee's principal import is raw jute, shipped direct from India. The county of Fife, rich in coal and iron, may be considered as a wide peninsula, between the Firth of Tay and the Firth of Forth. It forms the eastern boundary of Scotland's industrial and agricultural lowland belt which reaches west to Glasgow. The Firth of Forth apart from its importance as a naval haven—with Rosyth as



NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

Engraving from Finden's *Ports, Harbours and Watering Places*, 1840

harbour and base—forms a sort of eastern equivalent of the Clyde, and the port of Leith, which adjoins the city of Edinburgh, more than rivals Dundee as an all-round seaport and industrial town. It has a fine artificial harbour, excellent docks and vast warehouses, and like Dundee scores over Glasgow in its nearness to the Continent with which, in peace time, the bulk of its trade is carried on. Indeed most of Glasgow's own trade with the Continent passes through Leith via the railway system and the Clyde Canal which connects the two ports.

On the south side of the Forth is Grangemouth, with a large continental and coastwise trade, and imports of timber and iron ore. A good deal of the latter goes to the famous Carron iron works three miles from Grangemouth where most of Wellington's cannon were made.

Also on the south side are the smaller ports of Bo'ness, Granton and Newhaven (engaged chiefly in deep-sea fishing) and on the north side, Largo (port of Alexander Selkirk), and the coal ports of Burtisland and Methil.

Rosyth is one of Britain's finest naval bases with splendid dock yards and facilities for repairing and maintaining our biggest battleships; it was Beatty's cruiser base in the last war. It was in the Firth of Forth that the German Navy surrendered to Beatty, sailing in through twenty-three miles of British and American warships!

As we move south across the border it becomes increasingly evident that the size and importance of our seaports is related directly to coal ; not so much to coal as a prime export, but as the raw material of other industries. Coal and industry determine the density of population. They increase it physically and economically at the expense of agriculture, the direct producer of food. It is not that factories and cities actually occupy land that once grew corn and potatoes." The total land covered by a city like Sheffield, for example, is relatively insignificant. But industry, with its higher wages, saps the man power of agriculture. It makes goods in excess of its own capacity for consumption. It must trade these with other countries, which obviously must produce something else, and as this something is mostly the product of agriculture the home-grown product must be reduced. It is a vicious circle which perhaps will never be broken except by international goodwill and co-operation. The fact remains that where you get coal you get industry, and a density of population that must be fed chiefly with imported foods which must be transported and unloaded and distributed swiftly through ports. There is no coal between the Lothians and Northumberland ; there are no big industrial areas ; there are no seaports of size until we get to the Tyne, where we have Shields and Newcastle.

The Tyne still spells coal, although its export trade suffered a severe set-back in the slump that followed the boom years of the last war when many continental markets were lost for ever. As world trade began to recover slowly from its sickness a new factor arose which was to prove a serious menace to the coal export industry. This was the use of oil as fuel, not only in ships but in overseas industries which hitherto had depended entirely on coal imported from this country. Had the Tyne herself been dependent exclusively on the export of coal for her prosperity it is likely that the onset of the present war would have found the people of North and South Shields, Jarrow, Gateshead and Newcastle in complete distress. Things were not too good, it is true ; but shipbuilding, the river's chief creative industry, was well on the up-grade then, although, ironically enough, most of the ships being built were oil-burning and even oil-carrying !

I made a tour of north-east industrial England during the winter of 1935 when the Tyne was classified as a "distressed area." The shipyards at Jarrow had been permanently closed under a scheme which had for its object the rationalisation of the shipbuilding industry as a whole. Thousands of skilled men had been unemployed and on the dole for months on end. It was pitiful to see these men standing outside the employment exchanges. They were not starved. The "dole" at least gave them food. They were not ill-clad or dirty. In fact, their cleanliness and the whiteness of their hands were as tragically significant as the expression of boredom and hopelessness in their eyes. There were at that time scores of merchant



IRON AND COAL : THE INDUSTRY OF THE TYNE

Water colour by W. B. Scott, 1811-1890

steamers "laid-up" in the river, with only a watchman on board, their crews and officers all unemployed. I visited the vast ship yards of Swan Hunter's and was shown the very slip on which the *Mauretania* had been built. In the whole yard, there was only one ship on the stocks, a small destroyer which, I think, was being built for a foreign country. Most of the coal staiths whose mechanical equipment of hoists and conveyors is the finest in the world were idle and it was the same at Sunderland and Hartlepool and Middlesbrough where all but one of the numerous blast furnaces were cold, and there were not more than three ships in port, and these foreign. But I was fortunate to repeat my visit to the North-East at a later period when, with the stimulus of the Government subsidy to tramp-shipping and the general improvement in world trade, things were moving back to normal.

It was not a boom. It needed a war to produce that. There were plenty of men, young and old, loafing round the employment exchanges,



but all the shipyards were working to at least half their capacity, and orders were coming in fast. There was an exhilarating optimism in the air. An industrial depression is a vicious circle. A slack period in a town's chief industry affects not only its auxiliary trade (with shipbuilding, for example, the wire and cable, ship-furnishing, paint and varnish and electric fittings trades) but the retail shops, public services like trams, gas and electricity, and places of amusement. Only the pawnshop prospers. Thanks to subsidies, and subtle political machinations, certain foreign states had been able to make a serious challenge to Britain's long-maintained supremacy in ocean transport. But British ship-owners saw that it required more than a subsidy to beat this competition. The days of the old slow tramp had gone. New ships were required, economy ships they were called. Oil bunkers took up less space in a ship than coal. Oil took less time to load, making for a quicker turnabout in port. Speed, not only at sea, but in loading and discharging cargoes was everything. Hulls were being streamlined to take every advantage of increased power: and (in one sense unfortunately for the personnel of the merchant navy) these ships were labour-saving and therefore required a smaller crew. Most of the ships I saw under construction on this visit had an impressive beauty of shape, with their clipper bows and cutaway stern, and raked funnels. They were not all general-cargo ships. There were tankers and ore carriers, and fruit and meat ships. There were warships, too; and as activity in a chief trade reverses the vicious circle caused by depression, there was more business in the shops and cinemas, above all at the football grounds on Saturday afternoons. Even at Jarrow, the most hard-hit of the Tyne ports, things were better. There was no shipbuilding, but a revived ship-breaking industry had absorbed a fair number of the local unemployed, and there was a promise of new industries being started. The ship-repairing industry of the Tyne was also in full swing again. Here some incredible feats of naval engineering were being carried out, notably the fitting of new bows and a new stern onto an old tramp steamer, thereby increasing her length and cargo-carrying capacity to be in line with her new oil-burning engines!

The north-east industrial area extends south to the Tees, and includes the ports of Sunderland and Hartlepool. Both are concerned primarily with coal and shipbuilding and marine engineering, and their chief imports are timber from the Baltic, principally pit-props for the Durham coal mines. They both have fine artificial harbours, accessible at any state of tide and weather to the largest cargo vessels, with ample wet and dry dock capacity. With those of the Tyne, their yards and marine engineering works have a higher shipbuilding potential than any similarly associated group in the world. And it is to the lasting credit of the ship-building masters and men that they courageously weathered those terrible



STAITHES, YORKSHIRE  
Oil painting by Richard Eurich

post-war years of depression and that the industry was on its toes to meet the challenge of another and greater war. Hartlepool, by the way (like Shields at the mouth of the Tyne) is also a deep-sea fishing port, with a seasonal trade in herrings.

The river Tees forms the south boundary of the Durham coal field. It also marks the northern limit of the Cleveland ironstone deposits, and it was to the conjunction of these two minerals that the city and port of Middlesbrough owes its existence. It was not until 1830 that its first house was built, and like the Tyne, the Tees itself was almost unnavigable. To-day, with the practically adjoining towns of Thornaby and Stockton it is the centre of a great iron and steel-producing district. Here are blast furnaces which in normal times of prosperity darken the daylight sky, and at night redden it and afford a sure beacon to the incoming mariner, long before he has sighted the red and white flash of the South Gare lighthouse at the river mouth. Here, too, are the rolling mills and forges that made the girders of Sydney Bridge, the bridge over the Zambesi near the Victoria Falls, and many other famous constructions in all parts of the world. Here hundreds of thousands of ships'



THE SOUTH PROSPECT OF DOVER IN 1739



THE WEST PROSPECT OF HIS MAJESTY'S DOCKYARD AT CHATHAM, 1738  
Coloured engravings by S. & N. Buck

*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery, London*



LIVERPOOL IN 1846 : SEEN FROM UPPER TRANMERE, CHESHIRE  
*By courtesy of the Parker Gallery, London*



*By courtesy of the Redfern Gallery, London*

WHITBY, YORKSHIRE  
Oil painting by Richard Eurich, 1934



HULL : VIEW OF THE TOWN FROM THE RIVER  
Etching by W. Hollar, 1640

### III

COMPARED with the heavily industrialised and densely populated areas of which the Tyne, Wear and Tees ports are the centre, it would seem at a first glance that Hull is the centre of an agricultural area, and that the argument that the size of seaports is related to the nearness of coal must fail. Hull is certainly not situated on a coal bed. Neither is there any great industrial area close by. But it happens that she lies on an estuary which with its rivers and their tributaries and canals connects her, not only with the coal beds of West Yorkshire and their vast associated industries, but with the chief industrial towns of Lancashire, the Midlands, even with London. Water transport is slower but cheaper than rail. Barges can carry loads of 150 tons between Hull and Leeds, for example, and these may be loaded by what is called "overside discharge," that is, direct from ship's hold to barge, thus saving dock and warehouse charges. Altogether Hull is the base for six hundred miles of inland water navigation ; and, because of her nearness to the big continental ports, it is not surprising that she handles much of the normal continental export and import trade through her spacious and well-equipped docks. Her trade is not confined to the Continent, however. She is the natural raw material port for the wool industry of West Yorkshire. She handles immense quantities of grain and oil-bearing seed to supply her own flour and oil-cake mills. She exports coal and imports coal-mine timber. She is a fishing port too, with a fleet of two hundred and fifty steam trawlers, probably the biggest of any single port in the world, and with an annual catch worth almost four million pounds. As a by-product she produces meal and fertilisers from fish offal (once thrown overboard) and cod and halibut oil ; and there are smoke-curing factories.

Hull is not the only Humber port. Goole, higher up the estuary, is nearer to the coalfields and the inland waterways, and in many respects is a miniature Hull without a fishing industry, although she shares in this by building fishing craft. Grimsby almost at the estuary mouth is still



GRIMSBY : SELLING FISH

Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

the best-known deep-sea fishing port in Great Britain in spite of Hull's claim to a bigger fleet. A friendly rivalry exists between them, but whichever way the balance of fleet or catch goes it is certainly a small one. Both ports maintain a North Sea and an Iceland fleet. The ships of the former are mostly small and a trip usually lasts about a week. The "Iceland" ships are much larger, very fast, and are equipped with baths and very comfortable accommodation for their crews. They have refrigerating apparatus, so that their catch suffers little from the longer time at sea, and at both ports the facilities for discharging it, selling it, and despatching it to inland towns are admirable. One should visit the fish docks at Hull or Grimsby at six o'clock on a winter's morning to get a true impression of this phase in the epic of a sole, which starts way out on the North Sea, and ends as a Sole Meunière in an elegant London restaurant—or of an Iceland cod, sold in batter-plastered sections with a penn'orth of chips in a fried fish shop in Wigan.

The trawlers, their rigging festooned with icicles and frozen spray, their decks maybe inches deep in snow and slush, are berthed end to end along the walls of the fish dock, close up to the immense continuous shed which forms the market and contains centrally, the offices of the buyers. In peace time the decks of the trawlers are illuminated with powerful flood lights. The fish-holds are open. Screeching derricks hoist the fish up in boxes, baskets, or singly if they happen to be giant Iceland or



A FISHMARKET ON THE BEACH  
Water colour by Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

White Sea halibut or skate. They are swung round on to chutes, that slant straight into the shed, where gangs of sea-booted, oil-skinned men seize them and lay them out on the spotlessly clean concrete floor of the shed. When discharging is complete the auctioneers ring their bells. The buyers gather round, and by a seemingly unintelligible combination of rapid-fire speech, head-nod and other sign-language, the fish are sold, and the buyers' men haul them away to be washed, packed, consigned and loaded into special trucks of the fish trains (bound for various inland towns) that are waiting at the opposite side of the shed. Usually by half-past eight you will not see a sign of a fish in the entire market. The trawlers have moved on to another wharf where they are taking in bunkers, fresh water, ice, and stores again ready for another voyage. Grimsby has commercial as well as fishing docks and handles a good proportion of the continental trade, especially timber. Five miles up the Humber is the purely commercial dock of Immingham, built and still owned by one of the great railway companies.

South from Grimsby we find another long stretch of coast without towns or harbours of great importance. Lincolnshire is an agricultural county with no coal and the coast is flat, regular and shallow. There are, however, two small ports in the Wash of great historical interest, Boston and King's Lynn. Both lie at the start of canal systems, leading through a predominantly agricultural country into the industrial Midlands. They



are handicapped by the shallowness of their sea approaches, but they are important links in the purely coastal trade of Great Britain, and Boston, too, has a fishing industry. Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex again are agricultural counties, very flat, with no big industrial areas except in the south of Essex, and with a regular shallow coast that is fringed with sand banks. There are abundant rivers, but they are mostly shallow and only fitted for barge traffic. Yarmouth and Lowestoft, the only seaports between the Wash and Harwich owe their fame to the fact that they lie close to the seasonal migratory route of the herring shoals, and that the entire herring fleet of the British Isles (and also many continental fishing craft) are based here during summer and autumn. At this time both ports are the scene of prodigious activity. Speed is more important with herring than with any other sort of fish for they deteriorate under any direct economical process of refrigeration. They are caught close in to the coast within the short hours of the summer and autumn nights, and the drifters make for port at top speed as soon as their nets are hauled. Off-loading starts the very moment they are berthed. The fish are auctioned, but at Yarmouth and Lowestoft only a proportion are packed and despatched as fresh herrings for home consumption. The local curers buy most of the catch. Some are pickled. For this process hundreds of girls make an annual migration to East Anglia from the Western Highlands of Scotland and the Orkneys. These girls speak Gaelic and are famous for their good looks, and offer a perennial subject for the press photographer. They gut the herrings with incredible speed and dexterity, throw them into huge wooden troughs containing salt, then pack them into barrels which (again in normal times) are shipped to the Continent, especially Russia. But for home consumption herrings are cured into kippers or bloaters, or canned. Yarmouth has huge factories for this industry capable of producing millions of kippers and bloaters in a season.

As we move south to the Essex coast we are approaching the mighty industrial area of which London is the heart, and at the same time coming nearer to the continental seaboard. Harwich is the first of several ports which are engaged principally with express passenger and goods traffic across the Channel. The town itself is very old and its harbour and fortifications were important enough to be attacked by Dutch naval forces in 1666. This harbour has been modernised, and in 1924 was equipped as a train ferry station enabling passengers (and express goods) to travel from London to Zeebrugge and the continental railway systems without change from rail to ship and from ship to train again.

**L**EAVING London until the end of this survey, let us cross the mouth of the Thames estuary to the coast of Kent. Here at last is coal again, but its exploitation is only recent, and both in quality and quantity is of comparative unimportance. From here, however, and along the whole of the south coast as far as Southampton, the chief economic factors that have directed the rise and development of the coastal towns and ports have been the influence of London as the political and commercial capital, and the immense population of the city, outer London and her satellite towns: these and the proximity of the continental seaboard. Thus Chatham with Rochester and Sheerness may be regarded as London's naval base and dockyard and the stronghold of her fortifications: Margate, Ramsgate, Hythe, Hastings, Brighton as her seaside resorts: Dover, Folkestone, Newhaven as her continental ferry ports. Apart from that in Kent, there is no coal in the south of England: but it is the heavy industries like iron and steel smelting, shipbuilding, and the concentrated ones like cotton and wool, and motor cars, that are so dependent on a near supply of coal. The industries of the south are "light" and diverse, and, after all, they are not so very far away by rail and road and sea from the coal of South Wales and the Midlands. And again the energy of coal is brought to them, in the most convenient form of all for "light" industries, along the cables of the electric grid.

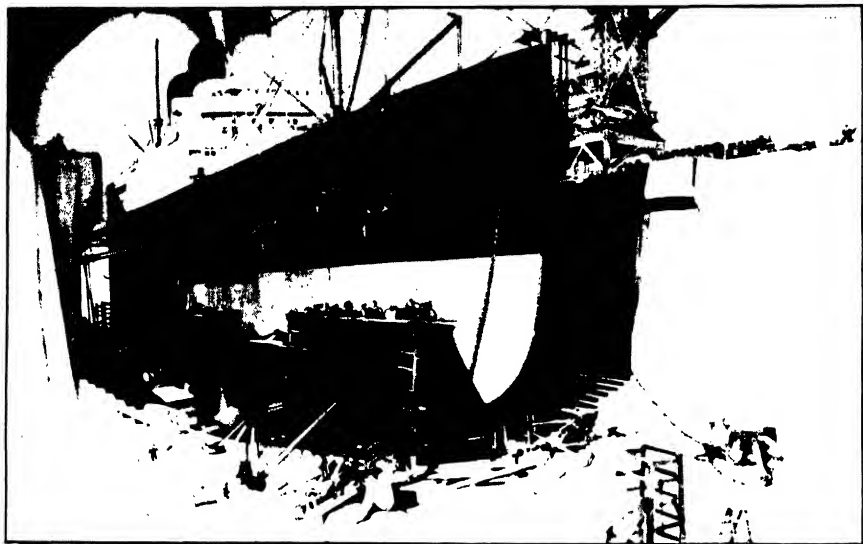
In the old days, London, great though she was herself, had what might be called her satellite seaports. There were five of them and they were known as the Cinque ports: Dover, Sandwich, Hastings, Romney and Hythe, although later Winchelsea and Rye were added to their number. Their chief duty was to furnish ships to the State. In the reign of Edward I they had to provide fifty-seven ships for a period of fifteen days without direct recompense, but they had many privileges, such as an exemption from taxes. Of the Cinque ports, only Dover to-day remains commercially significant, and Rye and Winchelsea have ceased to be ports, owing to the silting up of their harbours. Indeed, the whole of the south coast from Folkestone to the Isle of Wight has no big seaport. The main industrial artery of which London is the heart runs direct to Southampton, which challenges Liverpool's claim to be the second port of the Kingdom.

Southampton, although her origins are ancient, is of comparatively recent development. In fact, her first dock was not built until a hundred years ago. Before that, of course, the artery with London did not exist, nor were there any life-lines with the Midlands. She had no industries of her own save wooden shipbuilding. The natural advantages of her harbour and position were to become obvious enough in the dawn of the industrial age. She was near the Continent; she had an advantage

over London in that ocean-going ships had a shorter and safer route up and down the Channel ; her position was very sheltered ; she had the unique advantage of four high tides in the twenty-four hours, a phenomenon produced by the peculiar position of the Isle of Wight, and with the average fall between high and low water very small. Her close approaches were shallow, but the bottom was soft, and with the invention of the bucket steam-dredger Southampton Water became a deep channel, that became deeper still as the port developed and ships became bigger, until to-day the two biggest vessels afloat, *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth* could steam in perfect safety up and down the fairway. Not only this, they could go alongside the quays of the Ocean Dock without entering through locks and disembark their passengers direct into railway expresses for London and all parts of England. Again, for repairs or re-fitting these giant liners could enter the George V graving dock and dry out with greater ease and safety than one of the old Whitby brigs could enter the Whitehall dry dock.

No wonder that Southampton stole the express Transatlantic passenger service from Liverpool ; and her importance is not confined to this. A passenger sailing-list for May, 1939 includes, apart from the crack Atlantic liners of Great Britain, France, Germany and Holland, such names as the *Arandora Star*, *Arundel* and *Dunbar Castle*, and sailings to and arrivals from Australia, Japan, India, Egypt, South America, Jamaica, West, South and East Africa. And the passenger traffic represents only one side of the port's shipping activities. She has an immense import trade in fruit, grain, frozen meat, timber, wool and hides, and mineral oil. She exports the manufactures of South and Midland England. Because of her central position and closeness to the Continent, she has a large re-export trade too, re-shipping goods, for instance, from America to Turkey or from Belgium to South Africa, or the Plate to Denmark. In many ways Southampton is the most compact and up-to-date port in Great Britain, with thriving industries of her own, which include ship-building and aircraft-production, and is herself an airport, the base of the Empire Service of flying boats which still maintain communication with Egypt, South Africa, India and Australia.

Of the purely naval port of Portsmouth ("Pompey" as she is known in the Service) we shall have nothing to say beyond that she has a fine harbour, with dockyards, engineering works and arsenals which, since the days of Nelson, have made an immeasurable contribution to Great Britain's strength. Between Portsmouth and Southampton, on the opposite side of the Solent, is the seaport of Cowes which, if very small, is world famous as the headquarters of the Royal Yacht Squadron and for its annual regatta. On a fine summer's day before the war, the Solent might have offered to the spectator standing on the chalk hills above Cowes, a picture symbolic of Great Britain's everlasting concern with the sea :



SOUTHAMPTON  
The *Majestic* in the King George V graving dock

the pale blue Solent speckled with the white sails of racing and pleasure yachts and the barked sails of fishing craft ; ferry boats plying to and from Southampton and Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight ; small coastal steamers ; cross Channel packets bound for (or from) the Channel Islands, Cherbourg or St. Malo ; Cardiff colliers ; ocean-going tramps ; long, sleek tankers bringing oil from Mexico or the Dutch East Indies, or molasses from the Windward Isles ; banana and citrus fruit ships ; crack motor liners inward or outward bound for India, the Cape, Australia or South America, some engaged on what had then become one of the most popular types of summer holiday for the moderately well-to-do, the pleasure cruise : Atlantic liners, perhaps the *Europa* or the *Normandie*, the newly built *Mauretania* the second, or mighty *Queen Mary* herself : destroyers too, grey, sombre and rather sinister : cruisers ; maybe a whole naval squadron steaming out from Portsmouth for exercises, with battleships and an aircraft carrier, with scores of fighter and reconnaissance planes circling above ; and perhaps in serene contrast a huge Empire flying boat, inward bound from Australia gliding down to its journey's end.

There is no coal along the south coast of England and as one goes west from Southampton the heart-pumps of industrial and densely populated London weaken in their inward and outward thrusts which draw in food and raw material from the seven seas and force out manufactures. Weymouth in Dorsetshire has a good harbour and an export trade chiefly with London in the famous Portland stone which is quarried here. She is

a packet port too for the Channel Islands, but she is better known as a health resort and holiday centre. In fact, the whole coast from here to Devon and Cornwall is known as the English Riviera, with Torquay the modest and, of course, non-gambling equivalent of Monte Carlo. Even Plymouth—scene of that historic game of bowls played by Drake before he set out to trounce the ships of the Spanish Armada; home base of Raleigh, Gilbert, Grenville and many other Elizabethan sailors, fighters and explorers; port of departure for the *Mayflower* and the Pilgrim Fathers—is a popular holiday resort in peace time. There are no furnaces and very few factories to pollute the air or mask the loveliness of her Sound and its fringing cliffs, and the surrounding country, which rises in waves of low, rounded red-earthed hills to the dark massif of Dartmoor. Yet, with Devonport, Plymouth ranks second only to Portsmouth as a naval base and dockyard. She has very little export trade, but is an ocean passenger port, and some of the crack Atlantic liners, especially those bound direct for continental ports, call here to disembark passengers and British mail. In addition, Plymouth is the chief steam-trawling port of the south coast and a centre for the pilchard fishing and curing industry.

As we move west we are getting farther away from coal and industry. Cornwall once famous for its tin mines, has only one mineral of commercial importance. This is china clay, or kaolin, a substance resulting from the geological decomposition of her native granite. It is used, not only for the manufacture of pottery, but in the making of certain kinds of high-grade paper and paints, and is exported chiefly to Italy and the United States from Falmouth and Fowey, which was once famous as the base of the West India sailing packets. Cornwall's major industries are agriculture and fishing. Apart from Fowey and Falmouth, there are no harbours capable of floating vessels of any size, although there are scores of little harbours like Looe, Mevagissey, Coverack, Portleven, Penzance, and, on the north coast, St. Ives, Newquay, Padstow, Port Isaac, Bude. Some, like Looe and Penzance, can accommodate small coastal steamers, and Penzance has a regular import trade with the Scilly Isles in early vege-



TORQUAY FROM THE PAIGNTON ROAD  
Water colour by a late eighteenth-century English artist



THE HOE, PLYMOUTH

Water colour by J. M. W. Turner, 1775-1851

tables and flowers. But they are all principally fishing ports and some are holiday resorts of inland townspeople. Many of them, unfortunately, have had their natural beauty marred by the building of hotels and boarding houses, and villas ; even promenades and concert pavilions. The real beauty of the original Cornish fishing village with its white-washed cottages, slate roofs and winding streets, is not the quaintness of them, but that they were built honestly by simple honest people out of native material without any pretensions to "art." The cottages had to be close to the harbour, and therefore close to each other. There were no motor cars then and no traffic problems, so that the streets climbed and twisted according to the site. Perhaps the least spoilt and loveliest of them all is Polperro, and this, I think, is because, in spite of economic adversity, her native population has persisted in fishing, and stolidly refused to be ousted by the summer hotel, or lodging-house keeper or caterer.

Falmouth is the best proof of all that the growth and prosperity of a seaport is related less to the physical advantages of its harbour than to the proximity of coal and industry. Falmouth harbour clearly merits the term magnificent. It is naturally deep and wide and, since the building of a long sea wall, is protected from all winds and is very easy of approach.



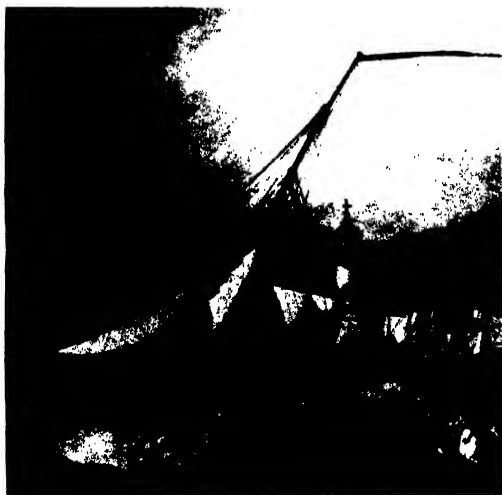
#### DARTMOUTH

Engraving from *Stanfield's Coast Scenery*, 1836

It was prosperous enough in sailing-ship days ; under adverse weather conditions an inward bound barque might make Falmouth three weeks before London and it was a very close rival to Bristol in ocean trade. But Bristol had coal on her doorstep, and although Falmouth owns splendid wet and dry docks, her activities as a seaport are chiefly confined to ship-repairing, although her exports of China clay were increasing up to the outbreak of the present war.

Bristol is one of the oldest seaports. It is recorded that as far back as the year A.D. 1000 she had a brisk export trade with Ireland in slaves ! In 1353 she was recognised as a staple port in wool, leather, wine and salt, and she played a big part in the discovery, colonisation and marine enterprise of the Elizabethan Age : Cabot sailed from Bristol in 1497. Her trade boomed in the early days of the Industrial Age. She was the natural outlet to the Atlantic for the manufactures of the south Midlands and attracted the main flow of American imports, especially sugar and tobacco. But as ships grew bigger her own approaches became inadequate and the rapidly developing port of Liverpool stole much of her import and export trade. Cardiff, which once had thrived by systematic piratage of Bristol's shipping began to steal her coal trade. But the building of a fine new system of docks at the mouth of the River Avon brought back much of Bristol's prosperity and while she is behind Southampton and

Liverpool in dock facilities for very large vessels she has a big share in the general Atlantic and Empire trade and has extensive light manufactures of her own, notably tobacco and cocoa. Cardiff, however, had won a supremacy in the export coal trade which she never surrendered. Not only was she situated close to inexhaustible deposits of coal, but to some of the richest anthracite beds in the world. Anthracite, being virtually smokeless, was the ideal fuel for warships until the coming of oil and for general commercial and domestic purposes it is doubtful whether it will ever be supplanted by any other fuel. Cardiff's docks were designed and built specially for the loading of coal, and their mechanical equipment of hoists and conveyors enables the biggest ships to load and turn about in an incredibly short space of time. But as I have said it would be bad economy if those ships came in empty, and the port is also engaged in an import trade of general merchandise, and it was this fact which helped Cardiff and her neighbouring ports of Newport and Swansea to weather the years of depression when the foreign export of coal dropped almost to zero. Again, these ports have their own industries: steel-making and shipbuilding and general engineering, although not so extensive as those of the Tyne.



RAMSGATE

Coloured aquatint from P. J. de Loutherbourg's  
*Romantic and Picturesque Scenery*, 1805



MILFORD HAVEN near the most westerly tip of the coast of South Wales, and at the mouth of the Bristol Channel is probably the finest natural harbour in the British Isles, and it cannot be argued that in this case its failures to develop into a first-class commercial port is due to its remoteness from coal, for some of the richest beds are quite near. The explanation is that the navy got in first, built docks at Pembroke, and then, when the need for national economy became so acute after the last war, closed these docks down, a decision which even then caused some heartburnings among the experts on national security. Yet while there is coal in Pembrokeshire, its natural flow is to Swansea, and from Pembrokeshire north along the west coast of Wales the country is agricultural. There are no big industrial towns or seaports, although there are plenty of minor ones such as Cardigan and Aberayron, Barmouth, and Pwllheli with tidal harbours and a coastal trade, and, of course, there are the Irish packet ports of Fishguard in Pembroke and Holyhead in Anglesey. But with West Wales it may be that her mountainous interior is as much the cause of her lack of big seaports, as the direct absence of coal. It makes a barrier between the coast and the industrial Midlands. There are plenty of rivers, but they are short and turbulent, and there are no canals. And for an opposite reason, because there is a gap between the mountains of North Wales and the Pennines, and a plain in which the Mersey and its tributaries flow gently from the heart of an interior rich in coal, Liverpool is the biggest sea port and city on the west side of the British Isles.

Purely as a harbour site, Liverpool originally did not possess one fraction of the natural advantages of Milford Haven, Falmouth or Pembroke. The seaward approaches of the Mersey are exposed, and as thick with shifting sandbanks as the mouth of the Thames. The estuary was shallow and the surrounding country flat and marshy. It was cotton that gave the first big impetus to her development—not because she manufactured this herself, but because she was the natural port for Manchester, which on account of the humid conditions prevailing in that more inland district of Lancashire and the abundance of coal, had become the world's chief cotton city. Liverpool imported raw cotton from America, and sent it (first by rail) to Manchester, and she exported it again in the form of woven fabric back to America, and to every other corner of the world. But if her approaches and estuaries were dredged and her docks built principally for cotton, her position on the Atlantic seaboard drew other import and export trades, notably grain, timber, oils and fats and she was established as the premier Atlantic passenger port in the hey-day of American emigration and settlement. The building of the Manchester ship canal which made Manchester into a port

naturally short-circuited a proportion of Liverpool's cargo shipping ; but this was offset by the general impetus it gave to the cotton and allied trades.

This canal was designed by Sir E. Leader Williams in 1882, but owing to political opposition it was not until 1885 that the Bill authorising its construction was passed by Parliament and another two years passed before work was begun. It was opened seven years later by Queen Victoria. It was an immense feat of engineering, for its purpose was to make Manchester accessible to ocean-going ships, which meant that it had to be considerably deeper and wider than the ordinary barge canal. Not only this, but there must be room for vessels to pass each other, or the traffic would be only one-way !

The total length is  $35\frac{1}{2}$  miles. It begins at Eastham on the Cheshire side of the Mersey, and more or less follows the course of the Mersey estuary to Runcorn ; then goes inland near to Warrington, where tidal action ceases and it is fed by the waters of the River Mersey and the Irwell. There are three entrance locks which keep the water-level approximately that of mean tidal high water. At Barton the Bridgewater Canal actually crosses the ship canal on a swing aqueduct, and many railway lines cross it by high-level viaducts. Again at one point the River Gowy is taken underneath the Canal by means of huge syphons. Its cost was tremendous, but its benefit to Lancashire trade has been immeasurably great. The cities and ports of Liverpool and Manchester have always been in many ways interdependent. They shared the prosperity of the boom years. They shared in the post war slump in cotton, a slump which like that in coal was not due entirely to bad international trade conditions, but of the rivalry of an alternative textile material—synthetic silk. Lancashire, however, instead of stolidly standing by, and waiting for cotton to boom again quickly established its own synthetic silk factories and mills, and the textile trade was getting well on to its feet again at the outbreak of the present war.

Liverpool has grown since the days of my ecstatic truant holiday, but not unrecognisably so. The transference of the big Atlantic passenger service was a blow to her pride as well as to her pocket, but she is still Great Britain's second seaport with a huge passenger and merchandise, Atlantic and world-wide trade. And her importance in this respect has not diminished with the war, nor is it likely to do when peace comes, for the ties that have always united her with the Americas and the Empire will be stronger than ever.

Preston and Fleetwood are the only other seaports of Lancashire. Preston actually closer to coal "cotton" than Liverpool, might have been a serious rival ; might even have been Lancashire's premier seaport, had not Liverpool as it were, got in first. The estuary of the River Ribble if enclosed and dredged might have made a very fine harbour. As

it is her docks are used chiefly for coastal and canal traffic, handling coal and her own extensive manufactures. Fleetwood is a fishing port with a large fleet of steam trawlers and drifters. She has fish docks of modern design, comparable with those at Hull and Grimsby, with which ports she has been in ever-growing competition since the end of the last war.

We are leaving coal as we go north towards the mountainous regions of Westmorland. But just inside the borders of North Lancashire on the north extremity of Morecambe Bay, there are extremely rich deposits of haematite, a high-grade type of iron ore superior to that of the north-east of England. With coal available by a short sea-passage from north Lancashire and also from Cumberland, this gave rise to a great iron and steel smelting industry concentrated at Barrow-in-Furness which in 1840 was a small fishing village, and is now one of Great Britain's foremost shipyards. It has commercial docks too, with an export trade similar to that of Middlesbrough and an import trade in Irish cattle, coal, of course, and timber. Haematite is found, too, higher up the Westmorland and Cumberland coast, and also coal which in places is actually mined under the sea. But although there are furnaces at Worthington, the two other ports of Cumberland, Whitehaven and Maryport export most of their coal and iron ore to Barrow. As with Liverpool and Preston, Barrow got ahead in the race for industrial development, and the better "natural" harbour was more easily adapted for dock-building than those on the exposed coast.

We come to Scotland again. There are many small seaports and potential commercial harbours along the coasts of Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Wigtown and southern Ayr, but all these counties again are agricultural in their main activities. There is no coal or concentrations of population until we reach the north part of Ayrshire and the mouth of the Clyde, the western boundary of the industrial belt of lowland Scotland which, as we have seen, extends from the Firth of Forth and owes its prosperity primarily to coal. Greenock, Dumbarton, Port Glasgow are the ports of the Clyde, with Glasgow herself holding undisputed place as the first port of Scotland.

In many ways the commercial history of Glasgow is like that of Liverpool. Little more than a hundred years ago the Clyde was practically unnavigable, and its potentialities were not realised until the growth of its inland coal-fed industries demanded an ocean outlet to the west, and an inlet for the commodities of the New World, raw materials, tobacco and sugar. Glasgow's first ships were sail. But she was as quick as the Tyne to realise the advantages of steam, and as she had the coal and iron she built steamships herself. Indeed, the first real steamship, the *Charlotte Dundas*, was built at Glasgow, and so was the first ocean-going steamship, the *Comet*; here, too, the first steamship dock was built by Napier and thus were laid the foundations of an industry which at Clydebank had



H.M.S. *ILLUSTRIOUS* ENTERING THE BASIN AT JOHN BROWN'S, CLYDEBANK  
Drawing by Sir Muirhead Bone

its culmination in the building of the world's two largest passenger ships, *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*, and the successful launching of them into a waterway which originally had been little more than a shallow muddy creek. I think that one of the most dramatic and inspiring events in the history of British shipping was that of the launching of the *Queen Elizabeth* by the Queen herself, at a time when the whole world was tense with anxiety as to the outcome of the Munich Conference. I was not an eyewitness of that launch, but I was one of the millions who by radio in this country and overseas heard the Queen in a clear, unfaltering voice make a speech as noble as anything in our language, in which she described the building and the launching of this fine vessel as "an act of faith"; we heard the smashing of the bottle of wine, the creak and groan, the splintering of wood, the rattling of great chains, and then a dull roar like that of an avalanche as the hull moved down the slip to the water, a roar that was drowned by that of the tumultuous cheers of the men who had built her. . . .

But if shipbuilding was (and is) the chief industry of Glasgow, she is a great manufacturing town, her industries ranging from cotton, jute and linen goods, to paper, glass, light and heavy machinery, and, of

course, brewing and the distilling of whisky. In peace time the value of her exports exceeds that of her imports : her imports being raw cotton, jute, grain, timber, tobacco, edible and combustible oils and fats, leather and food stuffs. Her trade is preponderantly with the United States and Canada, but ranges over the entire world. Glasgow, too, has an important ocean passenger trade, but principally in ships that carry cargo too. Greenock, closer to the sea than Glasgow, also has shipyards, but its principal home trade is sugar-refining with the import of which in the raw state most of its shipping is concerned, although it has also a fairly big fishing industry.

The interior of Scotland becomes mountainous north-west of the valley of the Clyde. There is no more coal, and even agriculture can be carried on only in the narrow valleys. Communication by road or rail is difficult. The population is sparse, and becomes sparser as we go north to Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness the starting point of our survey. There are in the north-west and extreme north coasts of Scotland scores of sheltered, deep-water lochs for whose natural facilities the builders, say, of London's port, would have paid millions. Yet apart from Fort William, at the west end of the Caledonian Canal, the coast is barren save for small fishing villages and ports, and even these are few and far between, although Stornoway is an important West Highland port and Kirkwall and Lerwick are fishing ports for the Orkneys and Shetlands. Coal in the history of Great Britain's seaports has indeed been king.

## VI

SEAPORTS and harbours cannot be mass-produced. Each one we have mentioned is individual and unlike any other. Yet all, of necessity have something in common, and as the activities of London's port embrace practically every form of shipping activity, she may be taken as typical. Her importance is not directly due to coal. Indirectly it is, for coal is the basic source of our national wealth, and London is the commercial as well as the political capital of England. Here at the very hub of the trade routes of the world are concentrated the great banks and financial and insurance houses without which international trade with all its complexities could not be carried on. Here are the ambassadors, the chief consuls, the commercial agents of foreign countries : here are the head executive offices of the great British shipping and railway companies, and the agents of almost every important trading concern in the world. London herself is a great manufacturing town, but above all she is a *market* in which every conceivable grown or manufactured commodity eaten or used by mankind is bought or sold, from



BLACK LION WHARF, CHELSEA  
Etching by J. W. M. Whistler, 1894-1903

wheat and wool and elephant tusks and coconuts, to rare drugs, bananas, diamonds, margarine, carpets, wine, platinum, books and locomotives. Most of these are imported, and are unloaded in London's Docks. Most of them are for home consumption, by the twenty million people who live and work within the economic distributive area of the port. But a big proportion of the goods that flow from all parts of the world to London's market are re-shipped to other countries, and by virtue of her own manufactures and by the fact that she is the focusing point of every rail and road transport system of England, the balance of export with import is maintained.

The Port of London includes the whole of the tidal portion of the Thames from Teddington Lock in Middlesex to an imaginary line drawn from Havengore Creek in Essex to Warden Point in Kent, a distance of nearly seventy miles. But the river is not navigable for ocean-going ships higher than London Bridge, and apart from Tilbury, the docks are concentrated on both banks of the Thames between Tower Bridge and Woolwich. That part of the river between London Bridge and Tower Bridge, known as the Upper Pool of London is tidal and is used principally by coastal and small continental steamers loading or discharging direct on to river wharves or overside into river barges. On the north side

proceeding down river from Tower Bridge are first of all St. Katherine Docks and London Docks, which include the famous Execution Dock, where pirates, including Captain Kidd, were hanged in chains at low water for three tides. These docks are small and are used by moderate-sized vessels engaged in the coast and continental import trades : marble, olive oil and silk from Italy ; fruit, wines and fresh vegetables and sardines from France, Spain and Portugal ; and manufactured articles and provisions from Belgium. But goods discharged from large vessels lower down the river are brought here by lighters and by road for storage in the immense warehouses that surround the docks. Nowhere else in the world will you see such a variety of goods : wool, hides and rare furs, wines, spirits, spices, sugar, rubber, Rattan canes, tallow, cutch, gums, drugs, essences, coffee, cocoa, tea, iodine, mercury, canned fruit and fish, hemp and coconuts and elephant tusks. The warehouses used for wool alone cover forty acres !

Next on the north bank between the loop in the river called The Isle of Dogs are the West India and Millwall Docks. The West India Docks were the first cargo docks to be built on the banks of the Thames and they were designed for the West Indian sugar trade originally borne in large sailing vessels. To-day sugar is still the principal import, along with molasses and rum, and fruit and other products of the West Indies. But the West Indies Dock system is also the chief centre of the London hardwood trade which includes mahogany, teak, ebony, jarrah, walnut, rosewood, cedar and boxwood. The Millwall Docks have a more general trade with the raw and semi-raw and manufactured goods of North and South America, the Baltic, North and West Africa and Russia. The East India Docks lie between the West India and the Royal Victoria and Albert and King George, and they are equipped for dealing with general import and export cargoes ; the Royal Albert and King George form the biggest and most modern dock system on the north bank of the Thames and it is here that the chief trade in Australian and New Zealand wool and frozen meat and dairy products is centred. But the activities of these docks cover practically every type of cargo and ship. In normal times as many as fifty large vessels may be berthed in them simultaneously ; huge cargo ships, tankers, and passenger liners from America, South Africa, India, China and Japan. Here on the dock side are the three largest flour mills in London handling grain direct from ships' holds and discharging it as bags of flour into trains and fleets of lorries, or barges or small coastal ships for re-export. Here comes a large proportion of the tobacco that is consumed, not only by Great Britain, but by the smokers of many European countries. Here are cold storage warehouses one of which can hold as many as 250,000 carcasses of New Zealand mutton. And from these docks, too, sail fast passenger liners to nearly every maritime country of the world.



THE FIRST SATURDAY OF THE BLITZ : THE PORT OF LONDON, 1940  
Oil painting by E. Boye Uden

On the south bank of the Thames between Rotherhithe and the Isle of Dogs, is another vast system of Docks known collectively as the Surrey Commercial, and as its name implies it has a general trade, but it specialises in soft-wood timber, and actually handles thirty per cent. of the whole of Great Britain's annual imports (nearly 2,500,000 tons). Most of this is fir, pine and spruce from North America, Scandinavia and Russia, and importers store it at the Docks until required by the market. For this purpose there are special sheds covering 77 acres, and open storage grounds sufficient to store half-a-million tons of timber.

Each of these dock systems would alone serve for a port of considerable size, but farther down the river are the Tilbury Docks, still under the authority of the P.L.A., and an integral and indispensable part of the port itself. They were opened in the year 1886, but since then have been greatly extended and improved until, with the building of a floating landing stage (similar to that of Liverpool) and a large graving dock, Tilbury is the finest dock system in the world, capable of handling all but the largest of the Atlantic super-liners. Tilbury, indeed, because of its



nearness to the sea, has captured much of the West India Dock passenger trade. From here, liners sail to the Far East, South Africa, North and South America as regularly as the Atlantic mails from Southampton, but, of course, it can never compete seriously either with Southampton or Liverpool in the direct express New York service. Its commercial docks have a general business comparable with that of the West India, but Tilbury is also a port of call with vessels discharging or taking only a part cargo.

While London (with her average pre-war arrivals and departures of ships more than 62,000) is undoubtedly Great Britain's greatest seaport, and probably the greatest seaport in the world, it would be unfair to say that she is more modern and go-ahead than the other big ports we have mentioned in this survey. Her docks are triumphs of engineering as is the deepening and widening of her waterways and their seaward approaches. But the same applies to Southampton, Liverpool, Glasgow, Hull and Newcastle. Her docks are equipped with marvellous machinery for the handling of ships, for the expeditious loading and discharging and storage of cargoes. There are cranes—electric and hydraulic ; there are suction plants for discharging grain ; conveyors and lifts for bananas and frozen meat ; bunkering apparatus both for coal and oil. There are special warehouses for grain, meat, fruit, wines and tobacco. But most of these exist, too, at the other ports. The truth is that all these ports are cogs in the huge machine by which our island nation exists. Small wonder then that an enemy bent on our national destruction has done his utmost to smash the cogs and bring the machine to a standstill. But those cogs are forged of something stronger than British steel : of British character. The harm done to our great and little seaports by ruthless air-bombing has been immense in lives and material. But the cogs have never ceased to turn ; and the machine, instead of slowing down, has moved at a greater pace. Bombs on their own homes as well as on the harbours have not deterred our dockers from carrying on the vital work of loading and off-loading the ships by which we eat and fight, any more than mines and U-boats and air attacks have deterred the sailors themselves in their hazardous voyages. Dock railwaymen, motor transport drivers, dock police (ashore and afloat), the fire-fighting services, the demolition and salvage squads, the civilian and naval port executive staffs have combined in a cool defiance of the enemy's frightfulness designed as much as anything to destroy morale. The Battle of Britain has been and will be, until Nazism is destroyed utterly, the Battle of our Seaports. And so far the seaports have won.











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